

the Journal

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Meditation Practices

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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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

When I first joined S.L.A.A. in 1998, I found a home group that met at a Hindu temple in the hills of Hollywood, California. The meeting was called “Focus on Spirituality.” We did 10 minutes of meditation at the beginning of the meeting. I’ve been going to that meeting every week since 1998. The first few years, I couldn’t meditate for 10 minutes. I would sit and stare at the paintings of Hindu leaders and wonder who they were. I would wonder what my qualifiers were doing. I would make lists of things I needed to do after the meeting. I would look at everyone else with their eyes closed and quickly avert my gaze so no one would think I was creepy if they caught me looking at them. I did this for four years until I had a spiritual experience and began to believe in God. It’s a miracle that I kept trying for that length of time! Patience has never been my strong suit.

I would get little tidbits of advice on meditation over the years and this helped me calm my mind. A few of the stories in this issue talk about breathwork. Sometimes I forget to breathe! It’s a good reminder to keep it simple and be aware. I really enjoyed reading this issue. I hope you do too.

Lisa C., Managing Editor, *the Journal*

Question of the Day & Answers from Yesterday

The Question of the Day for this issue is, "Meditation Practices – Tell us about your meditation practice. How do you get started and how

do you continue?" 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: #214 – May/June – Life Stressors and Grief: How do you cope with grief and other large life stressors while living sober? Deadline for submissions is March 15, 2025. And #215 – July/Aug – *ABM Issue* – Sponsorship – What makes it work? What challenges have you faced? Deadline for submissions is May 15, 2025. Please go to <https://slaafws.org/thejournal/> and click on "Answer Question of the Day."

Tell us about your meditation practice. How do you get started and how do you continue?

Before coming into the program, I didn't have a meditation practice. A sponsor suggested attending online S.L.A.A. meditation meetings - this helped me to show up for myself on a schedule and also made me feel less alone.

The local Buddhist Centre offered some free evening classes on meditation which I took advantage of, and now as my life has gotten busier and I struggle to make time to meditate, I make use of apps available on my phone before bedtime.

When I am struggling to meditate, I share about it in meetings and outreach and sometimes this prompts me to get back to it. Talking to fellows who have also struggled and getting tips from them has also helped. For example, one fellow had an alarm that showed up on their phone that simply said 'time to meditate!' which acted as a prompt and an excuse to leave a social situation at times too!

– MIRA, UK

Question of the day

I start with a timer and put three minutes on it. I continue to meditate because when I don't do it, my day doesn't work so well.

— ANONYMOUS

Breathwork.

— ANONYMOUS

Get comfortable in a quiet place. Sometimes I read the daily reading; sometimes I ponder a question encountered in my Step work or an issue from my sponsor. Sometimes I just clear my head of all thought while I relax. Sometimes I journal afterwards. Sometimes I nap for 20-30 minutes if that feels nurturing.

— ANONYMOUS

I have to remember the simple transformative wisdom of the A.A. Big Book (pages 85-88). It suggests that meditation for the day ahead includes asking God to guide my thinking and purify it from self-will. Because I am an addict, driven by self-will, always trying to run the whole show, even when trying to be 'kind', I have to pray and meditate this way to stay sane and sober. However popular or spiritual other meditation practices may seem, I have to emphasize these recovery themes.

— ANONYMOUS, AUCKLAND, NZ

Question of the day

I got started with just three minutes a morning of simply looking where my third eye is supposed to be. I'm not a big believer in chakras and nothing visual happens when I do, but it is a way to focus both my body and mind and works for me! Every few weeks I added on a minute or so.

I reached 20 minutes eventually. That's my sweet spot. Have been meditating every day for the last seven years. On chaotic weeks, I make sure I do just as many minutes as I can squeeze in. Even if that's five minutes or a snatched few minutes on the tube.

However, when I start my day off with meditation, it's always smoother and calmer. I really notice when I don't meditate. My mind gets too busy for me to handle again. So, I try not to let my practice lapse!

— ANONYMOUS

I start my morning meditation practice with saying my mantra with my prayer beads followed by silent meditation for at least 5 minutes. I then say my prayers and read my daily readings and finish my morning practice by writing down items on my mind that day and putting them in my God box. I continue my meditation practice through the day with reminders I've placed on my smart phone that read "breathe and give thanks." I follow a similar routine (mostly focused on prayer and daily reflection) at the end of my day.

— MANUEL, CATHEDRAL CITY

Question of the day

I have gone to silent meditation retreats. One helpful tool for continuing is to set a regular time every day (you can do this with a buddy/buddies too) that you must hit the mat, and don't time yourself if the idea of time stresses you out or you find yourself always checking the clock.

— ANONYMOUS

It has become almost daily that I wake up, pray on my knees, and then set a timer for 20 minutes. I then read 7 daily readings from various sources- all but two are directly Twelve-Step recovery approved literature. I then sit, usually on my bed or in a chair, and just be. I seek my higher power GUS's will for me. The Great Universal Spirit has yet to speak directly to me. I have been in active recovery for over 30 years.

It started out with the Eleventh Step Prayer attributed to St. Francis. I do my best to attend a weekly group meditation session.

Sometimes it's just as simple as focusing on the breath- I obtained this through my infrequent yoga practice.

As I am writing this, I hear a plane and a flock of birds. Listening to my surroundings actively is another way of meditating.

— ANONYMOUS

Readings

— CAROL H., LOVE ADDICT

Question of the day

To start meditating, I usually read a prompt, like from the “State of Grace” or “Bhagavad Gita” - then I sit in silence, and try to repeat a piece of the reading that stood out to me in my mind over and over like a mantra. Then I try to keep repeating until my mind feels empty. Once I get to that open space, I start counting very slowly to stay in this space. If I fumble on the numbers, I start over counting from one, to recalibrate and keep going.

— CAITLIN, NYC

I do guided and or group meditations in meetings. Doing it together helps me to find meaning in what I’m doing and the support to continue on.

— MISHA, SALT LAKE CITY

I started with a meditation app. I like the guidance but also the silence (not too much music) and started with five-minute meditations before I did longer ones. I try to do it each morning before I leave for work to get myself in a calm headspace. Sometimes I have strong emotions in the morning and my routine has also become about letting my body feel these strong feelings. I basically try to find time to get out of my head and into my body. I do it right in the morning and no longer than 10 minutes, otherwise it becomes a chore and I won’t keep up with it.

— KELLY-JOY, FRANCE

Question of the day

I get started during the daytime mostly and do transcendental meditation. I meditate once during the day and at night I say a mantra as I fall asleep. If I notice agitation, I pause and meditate using the tools of transcendental meditation.

— ANONYMOUS

I never meditated before joining this program in the early 1990s but have been a regular meditator since. My message is that knowing exactly how to meditate correctly is not necessary. I've focused on a prayer, tried breathing in saying thank and breathing out saying you, and now I just focus on being in the very moment. What's most important is just meditating to whatever level we can. Perfection isn't necessary.

— ANONYMOUS

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>

Practicing Listening



Early in my recovery journey I appreciated hearing in a meeting that prayer was talking to HP and meditation was listening. Meditation began for me as a very simple practice. I would set a timer for one minute, focus on my breathing,

and anchor myself in the sensations of breath. I'd notice the air coming in through my nose, my lungs filling, my belly expanding, and then the exhale. If my mind wandered, I'd guide it back to my breath. This was a practice I could do

anywhere—often at work I would step into the bathroom, or even in a closet to get a private space and set my timer. If clarity didn't come during that minute, I'd simply start the timer again. Over time, those one-minute sessions often left me feeling more settled, with clearer thoughts by the time the timer went off. It was my reminder that I could start my day—or even just my mindset—over at any moment.

As my practice deepened, I explored other approaches to meditation. At one point, I committed to 15-minute meditations in the morning and evening, using mantras to help me refocus when my thoughts wandered. The breath, however, remained my steady foundation. A pivotal moment in my practice was discovering a book on present moment awareness. It transformed how I approached meditation, helping me integrate compassion and inner child work. This process aligned beautifully with the recovery tools I was using, particularly the idea of addressing unmet childhood needs as spoken of in the S.L.A.A. Basic Text writing on Step Four.

Meditation has always been a practice, not perfection. I've never floated in the lotus position near a waterfall while koi fish leap and gold coins rain down. I haven't become the Buddha. What I have become is more comfortable simply being.

When my thoughts begin to race, I return to that original one-minute meditation as my touchstone. These days, my practice includes daily 10-minute meditations in the morning and mindfulness during what I call my "higher power runs," where I talk to my higher power out loud while on a run in the woods and then listen in the stillness, while paying attention to the forest. Each month, I pause to ask myself, *what does my practice need to look like this month?*

More often now, I find myself enjoying the space between thoughts. Eckhart Tolle's words resonate deeply: "Have you heard the voice in your head? That proves you are not the voice—you are the one listening." Meditation, for me, has become about cultivating that listening and appreciating the stillness in between.

— BLAZE T., NC

Step Questions

Workbook: An Interview

Speaker 1

So, you shared that you were doing the Eleventh Step in the “Step Questions Workbook”. You said you were researching meditation practices and I was wondering about your experience with that. What kind of meditation did you try? What was your path with that question?

Speaker 2

Yes. So, I found some spots that are close to where I live, where there are meditation groups just to kind of tap into a community of people who are also meditating. And I don't know exactly what kind of meditation they were practicing, but I tried a couple of different groups and I liked being around other people who are doing it. It helps me really drop into the experience and feel that support that I feel at meetings with another group of people. So the exact types I'm not sure, but I enjoy the experience of being with others while doing it.

Speaker 1

And what is your medita-

tion practice that you settled on? You said you had found something that you do every day and that the discipline of it was good. So what do you do with that?

Speaker 2

Right now I'm in another Twelve-Step program. I'm in ACA, and so I have my meditation broken up into three parts. The first part is ACA affirmations. I'll read the affirmation and I'll do breathwork—a long inhale and exhale and I'll think about each affirmation from the ACA workbook.

And then the second portion. If there's a qualifier of some sort that I am maybe preoccupied with, I do a meditation practice that a fellow in S.L.A.A. recommended, which is I inhale and I say to myself, *I connect with me* and exhale. When I exhale I say to myself, *I release you*. And I do that for three minutes. Then the last portion is for three minutes. I inhale and I say to myself, *I connect with higher power*. *I release my adult child*, which is lingo from ACA.

Speaker 1

So what are the affirmations like? Can you give me an example?

Speaker 2

Yeah. One of the affirmations is, "I didn't cause my parents' dysfunction."

I think there is one about "I am valuable." It's really just about releasing myself from dysfunction that occurred in my household.

Speaker 1

Did you struggle with meditation? I didn't like the idea of meditation because it sounded too open minded or too out of the ordinary for me. And I didn't believe in God when I came into Twelve-Step programs. It was really difficult for me to get over those blocks. Do you have blocks with meditation?

Speaker 2

Yes. I had a few of them. I

have a hard time sitting still and I just want to get up and be more active, so just that part was difficult. Then, my mom is a yoga therapist with a clinic, and she does a lot of research in the area of meditation and yoga, and has been talking about meditation for a decade or longer. And I have a really difficult, strange relationship with my mom. And so it's been hard for me to kind of disconnect the idea of meditation in this practice from my mother. And so that was a huge block because I think my rejecting of meditation was really just this complicated thing that I had with my mom that I had to get over.

Speaker 1

Well, thank you very much for sharing about this. I appreciate it.

—ANONYMOUS

Understanding Basic Spiritual Needs

"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a Power greater than ourselves." (Step Eleven)

Prayer and meditation sound like huge tasks. For some they present a big burden, a tough requirement, or a boring chore.

Many addicts struggle to figure "this God thing" out. I have found that using a personality test has helped me to unearth my most basic spiritual needs.

Step Eleven calls for spiritual discipline and understanding my personality type has helped me be spiritually attuned to what I need.

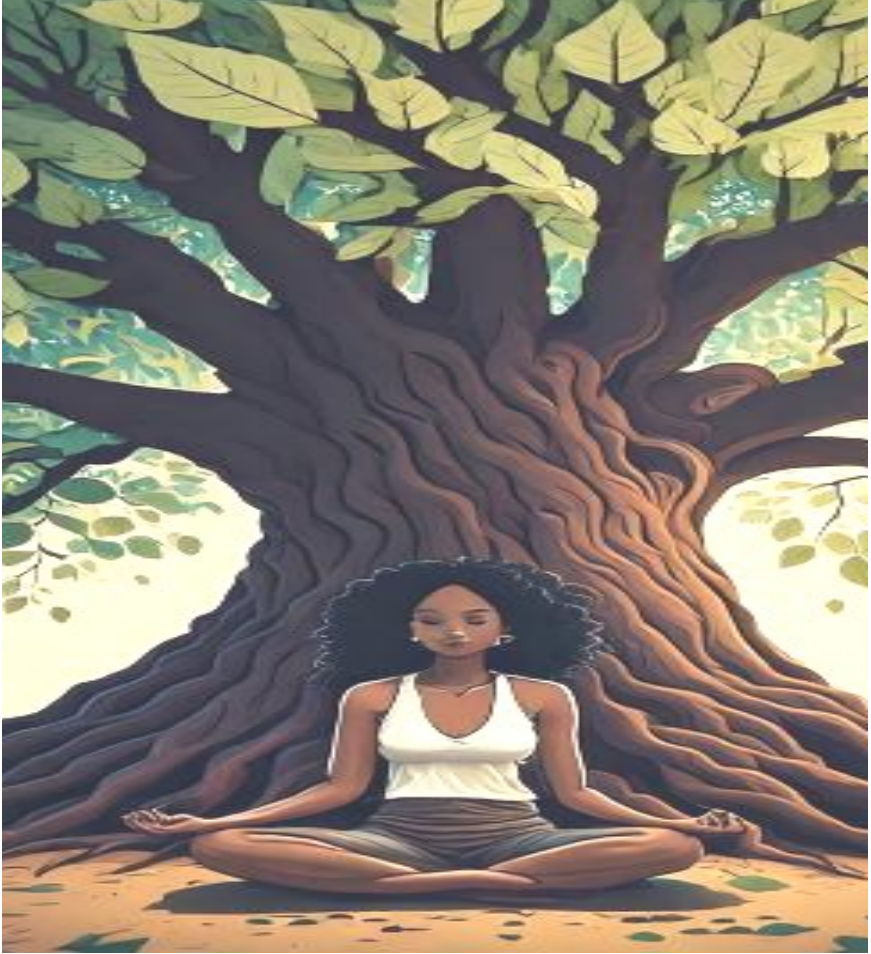
This is not a certain higher power but a frame of reference. The personality test describes nine personality types based on their basic spiritual needs. I am a One. The basic need of Type One is that I need to trust that I am enough. In the

S.L.A.A. Basic Text, I found a person with a similar need: "I became aware that every affair that I had had occurred just after I moved or accepted a new job. I realized that when I was insecure I looked for an affair to give me courage or calmness." (I Couldn't Fool Myself Any Longer, page 179, S.L.A.A. Basic Text.) Like myself, this person was always looking for a better job because they never trusted they were good enough. And with this uncertainty came spiritual pain which was drowned in sexualization.

Understanding this spiritual need helps me to validate that need. It's okay that I need to trust that I am good enough. That is the void I have to fill through prayer and meditation, so that addictive behavior does not take over. That is how I improve conscious contact with God.

— DANIEL, SALT LAKE CITY

Meditating



My sponsor told me to close my eyes and imagine myself sitting at the base of a tree. She told me to imagine my character defects written on the leaves of the tree. Then she said to imagine each of those character defects and leaves floating away with the wind.

—ANONYMOUS

Share space

Service as a Resource

My experience as a member of the 50th-Anniversary Basic Text Subcommittee

By Sharon S.

The S.L.A.A. Preamble suggests service as a resource “to counter the destructive consequences of sex and love addiction” by “giving back to the S.L.A.A. community what we continue to freely receive.” S.L.A.A. runs on service. Meeting chairs, writers, editors, committee members, business-meeting delegates, and trustees — *everyone* volunteers their time.

I began doing service work soon after I came into S.L.A.A. I did it because my sponsor told me to, and I was desperate enough to listen for a change. Now, 12 years later, service is

the bedrock of my program. I have no doubt that if I didn’t do it, I’d still be out there.

My service work includes being part of the team charged with editing the Basic Text for a second edition. After four years in that capacity, I was asked to join the parent committee, the 50th Anniversary Basic Text Subcommittee of the Conference Literature Committee (50BTS). Now I’m seeing firsthand the complexity of the project and the deep commitment of my fellow members on the 50BTS.

Let me share what I’ve learned.

Quick Facts about the 50BTS:

- The 50BTS was formed after the 2017 Annual Business Meeting and Conference

(ABM) discussed a special edition of our Basic Text to mark the Fellowship's 50th anniversary in 2026.

- Fifteen people have been members of the 50BTS since August 2019. Others have worked on its subcommittees and work groups, and some have given invaluable one-time assistance. Over the years, three different sitting Trustees have provided a bridge between the 50BTS and the Board.

- Currently there are five working members.

- Collectively, current and past members have a total of 235 years in the program, with an average of 21 years in S.L.A.A.

I asked current and past 50BTS members why they got involved with this important project. Here's some of what they said:

Why was it important for you to be involved on the 50BTS?

Deb W., Ohio, 35 years in S.L.A.A.: I was motivated by the possibility that the Basic Text of S.L.A.A. could be updated and modernized to suit the diversity now present in

our Fellowship.

Kim B, Nevada, six years: I really liked the idea of revisions to the original Basic Text. I believed it needed to be updated for today's addict. It was missing many manifestations of sex and love addiction that have surfaced since the first writing, particularly those related to technology.

Christiane, Germany, 21 years: I wanted to contribute to keeping our Basic Text a living document. It needs to include contemporary topics such as Internet porn, Internet dating, anorexia, and LGBTQ. I was especially interested in adding the European/non-US perspective.

Seth S., Massachusetts, 13 years: I believe the Basic Text is deeply meaningful to the entire Fellowship and a revised edition of the book is essential to continuing to send the message to the still-suffering addict.

Jenny R., Massachusetts, 39 years: I joined in order to share my institutional knowledge. I am fortunate to have been around long enough to have received a draft of the first version of the Basic Text when I joined the program. I attended meetings with the founder and the editors of the

book as it was finalized. I was the Executive Director of F.W.S. when the book was edited for typos and changed to include more recent versions of the Steps.

Susan G., California, 18 years: I want the Fellowship to have the most readable version of the Basic Text possible. As a woman, the Basic Text (as originally written) didn't really speak to me. Now that it has been edited, I think it is relatable for all women and all people.

What does the Basic Text mean to you?

Kim: When I first read the S.L.A.A. Basic Text, I finally understood that I was not alone. There were others like me. I learned there was a way out of the madness. I had a disease but there was a solution.

Stephen S., Pennsylvania, 29 years: The Basic Text saved my life. When I first came into S.L.A.A. there wasn't much sobriety in the meetings I attended. The book offered me hope. It made sense to me, so I clung to it as a life preserver.

Susan: It is a message of recovery in our relatability to it. This book talks about the really hard things and it's such

a relief to know we are not alone, that there are others like us. The new stories broaden our perspectives and speak to all of us.

Chris D., California, 33 years: Freedom and life. I think I read the Withdrawal chapter every other day for my first six months.

Why is publishing a revised second edition of our Basic Text important for S.L.A.A.?

Seth: Revising and publishing the book is so important to the Fellowship right now. Not only is a new edition necessary for recovery, the revenue a new book can generate for the faltering finances of the Fellowship is vitally important.

Rita H., Montreal, 25 years: It is time we move into the 21st century and update our stories in particular so that newcomers can relate. Right from the beginning I found members of my Tuesday noon group stumbling when reading from the Basic Text. The sentences were long, convoluted, and difficult to read and understand, especially for members whose first language is not English.

Susan: There are some out-

dated ideas in the Basic Text (not inclusive, or perhaps even offensive to some), as well as stories that are not relatable and need to be retired. It's important that our Fellowship knows that our literature is evolving and progressing (other fellowships are on fifth editions). It's time for our Fellowship to broaden its horizon.

Christiane: In order to help addicts to find themselves in the book, the Basic Text needs to include the issues that are out there today that weren't around at the time the book was written, specifically anything about the Internet.

Kim: I think it is necessary in order for our Fellowship to continue to carry the message of hope to those addicts with manifestations of the disease that are not represented in the book.

Jenny: I have heard through the years that the Basic Text is written in a way that is difficult for people to read and understand because of its reading level and the language used by the writers. I watch people struggle to pronounce and understand certain words and concepts. The Basic Text was written by "Rich" as a

gift to the program. When it was written, recovery and sobriety in S.L.A.A. were very new. I think there are many things to add to the book since more people have experienced the blessings of S.L.A.A., and that it will give people hope and a better sense of what is involved in working the Steps.

Deb: There has been a lot of change since 1976. Our Fellowship has grown across the world in number and diversity. I think the Second Edition of the S.L.A.A. Basic Text reflects these changes without changing the basic message of help, support, recovery, spirituality, and acceptance.

Help, support, recovery, spirituality, and acceptance — I receive all of these from my service work with the 50BTS. I can sense our Higher Power's guidance in our meetings, which are remarkably free of drama, conflict, and ego. We listen to one another with respect. We disagree on things, but talk and process until we reach consensus. The team is deeply committed to the project and to S.L.A.A. I am fortunate to be a part of it.

— SHARON S.

Three Wedding Dresses



I have never been married but I have had three wedding dresses in my life.

Dress One: When I was 15, I began a romantic relationship with a boy at my school. He pursued me gradually and I

was very much myself when we hung out. We had a lovely summer enjoying picnics in the park and scenic walks. He even made me a mixed tape. But once school was back and the relationship was made official,

my behaviour changed.

He was older than I and very popular. He was a student leader, played sport for the first team and was attractive and outgoing. I put him on a pedestal and started changing myself to what I thought he wanted me to be.

I became obsessed with my own fantasy that we were going to get married as soon as school was over.

He started pulling away from me at school, not acknowledging me when he was with his friends, and only giving me attention when we were off the school campus. This hot and cold treatment just made me even clingier.

One day I went to a vintage shop and found a lovely white medieval style wedding dress. I tried it on, and it fit perfectly. It was made for me!

I excitedly told him all about it, hoping he'd be equally excited!

But he wasn't. He broke up with me instead.

"We're just not compatible anymore," he said. Which really meant, you're a needy, delusional, wedding obsessed weirdo. He wasn't wrong.

Dress Two: My mom caught me looking at wedding dresses online once and told

me not to get married for the dress. What sage advice, I thought. It didn't stick.

My long-term boyfriend from my 20s and early 30s was dragging his feet regarding marriage. Instead of having some self-respect and breaking up with him, I thought I could orchestrate a wedding from behind the scenes, including puppet-mastering my own proposal.

I went to another vintage shop (these seem to be crack houses for romance addicts) and found another wedding dress. This one was from the 1940s, complete with a satin velvet bodice and a magical tulle skirt. The shop was even able to tailor it to my body. It was meant to be!

I bought the dress, and the shop assistants congratulated me on my engagement. The dopamine hits were like Turkish Delight. Soon I was skipping along with an unsuspecting friend to the Wedding Expo in town where all the stakeholders in the wedding industry had set up shop. I grabbed business cards like a child in a sweet shop, getting more and more hits from the well-wishes. I was getting high on visions of myself being photographed as I shimmered down

the aisle to the dulcet strains of a string quartet. Once rumours of our impending nuptials reached my boyfriend, he had to summon all his courage to say, "Please wait for me to propose before you go around telling everyone we're getting married." I did put a brake on things, at least on the surface. But my real take away from that conversation was that he was going to propose one day. I just had to wait.

But he didn't. He broke up with me instead.

Dress three: I was now in my mid-thirties, single for the first time in a long time and just not knowing what to do with myself. I thought to myself: maybe I should take a break from relationships for at least a year to heal, reflect and tend to other areas of my life.

This sounded like such a sensible course of action. So, I did the exact opposite.

I dated compulsively, getting attached deeply to people I barely knew and landing up in a relationship with a person who I was madly attached to, but who treated me terribly. It got to a point where I was terrified of this person and had absolutely no idea how I was going to get away from them, but at the same time did not want to let go at all. The very

thought made me feel like I was going to die. How could I ever live without them?!

Life brought me to my knees. I was forced to call the police one day when the situation got violent. As the police were dragging my ex-partner away, I tried to stop them from doing so and the police had to confront me fiercely: "You called us. Now back off and let us do our job!"

I was trying to protect a person from the very people who were protecting me from that person. How far I had fallen down the rabbit hole of insanity!

I called out to God, "Rescue me!" I felt embarrassed asking God for help because I had caused all the drama I had gotten myself into and didn't feel I had the right to be rescued. But I had nowhere else to turn.

And God was gracious. He not only rescued me, but He rescued my ex-partner too. We both landed up in Twelve-Step programs. We decided to go no contact. This was the hardest thing I have ever done, but it saved us both.

I joined Sex and Love Addicts and have not looked back. The tools, the fellowship, the Steps, the meetings, everything has been so enriching, comforting and empowering.

Above all, my Higher Power, the loving, wise God who gently takes my hand and guides, heals and restores me, has been lifesaving.

And now for my third wedding dress. It has a beautiful bodice made from serenity, a stunning sash crafted from courage and a full flowing skirt

woven from wisdom. The first dress is only a memory; the second dress lives in my costume collection and comes out for the occasional play; but the third dress is my true dress. The dress of recovery, in which I walk down the aisle of God's will, holding His hand.

— LAUREN

In a Moment's Time

How many times have you gone to a recovery meeting and sat there trying to figure out just why you were there? There are obviously a zillion reasons, but that's not what I'm going to talk about here. I was at one of my weekly S.L.A.A. recovery meetings the other day, and as I was listening to all the folks share, it suddenly dawned on me what I was missing in the majority of my life, and I'm beginning to understand that it was in fact my Kryptonite!

The thoughts started quietly in the back of my mind and grew into an understanding beyond anything I have ever experienced in my 80+ years of life. As I listened to the shares,

I began to feel common threads of each share that seemed to be pulling thoughts together. One story was about loss of relationships, one was about self destructing relationships and another about infidelity. All these were different yet they all in the end were the same. There could have been 50 shares that sounded different on the surface, but in the end they were all the same.

I am in fact a sex and love addict. Beyond that, is the logic of life that got me there. I had always been under the belief that sex and or love were the engines that drove my train throughout my life. Granted, it took a few years to have an un-

derstanding of what those were, but once that paradigm was set, life should take care of itself.

I'm going to be quite embarrassed if I'm the only one who thinks that way, but I'll claim it if that's the case, and if that is the case, what's next?

I think (I say it that way because I'm not schooled in any field that would be applicable here), after much reflection on my circumstances throughout my life that the missing piece of the puzzle is not love or sex, yet they have a role to play, but we above all, need to be needed!

In quiet times or when just watching a TV show, my first wife would just sit and look at me. I didn't understand that she wanted a connection deeper than love. I pushed her away and in the end she left! Oh what a foolish man I am!

It does not matter what two people are together. Race and gender have no part in the neediness. Time is not even a factor. The Soul (I'll call it that, because it's my interpretation of it), requires attention, and in that thought, lies my greatest fear. I have searched all my life to find that mate to bond myself with, because I don't want to be alone! Love is the label that we put on it, until we figure out that we made a mistake, then we call it divorce or separation. It doesn't matter, the pain is always the same.

We spend our lives looking for that connection to be made. I think everyone hopes for that lightning bolt to strike us and we will ride off into the sunset with the person that will fulfill all our dreams. Sadly, love at first sight is a rare event. Yet it can happen in a moment's time.

— JOHN S. IN RECOVERY

ANNOUNCING
A NEW MEETING!

All-Gender SLAA NEW LITERATURE STUDY



Each week we will read a personal recovery story from the new draft copy of the SLAA 50th Anniversary Basic Text.

Please join us on Tuesdays starting on January 7, 2025 and be among the first people to hear these amazing new stories of recovery.

TUESDAYS

10:30 am PT / 1:30 pm ET
6:30 pm UK

Meeting ID: 874 1967 1188
Passcode: 311933

Together we can do what
we could never do alone.



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CELEBRATES

500,000 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, 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.

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