

# THE OUTER CIRCLE

## **A Place at the Table**

**A loving Higher Power and the Twelve Step solution  
moved this fellow from shame to grace**

### **PLUS**

**Dear Grace**

**Living in Sobriety**

**Healthier Sexuality**





International  
Service Organization  
of SAA, Inc.

## About *The Outer Circle*

As the first iteration put it in 1998, *The Outer Circle* newsletter “carries the message of hope to the sex addict who still suffers” — especially prisoners and others who don’t have the Internet.

Through the *TOC*, the fellowship contributes articles and poems that focus on working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. It also communicates ISO news, regional activities, and other items of interest.

SAA meetings and groups are encouraged to reproduce *TOC* at no charge and display it alongside other SAA literature so it will be available to all members. To keep costs down, please print out the online version.

If you have comments or suggestions please send them to [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org), or by postal mail to the ISO office (page 28). To have an article considered for publication, see our Submission Guidelines on page 30.

To ensure that future issues can be offered without cost, please consider making a tax-deductible donation now to support publication of the newsletter.

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## A Change For the Better

BY GARY T.

**Gone are the days of black and white. Now you can enjoy your TOC in living color — including photos!**

After more than six years in recovery, I've learned that like a lot of addicts, I don't deal well with change. So I'm aware when you received this issue of *The Outer Circle*, it may have been jarring.

But while change can be hard, it's often necessary to move forward in recovery. I hope you come to see the same is true of the new *TOC*.

The goal of the redesign was twofold: 1) Give *The Outer Circle* a more readable, contemporary design; and 2) Provide more fellowship news and information.

On the first point, we surpassed even my lofty expectations. Gone are the days of black and white. Now you can enjoy your *TOC* in living color — including photos! Thanks to Joe H. and Chris F. for helping make those changes happen. But the biggest thanks go to the designer, Tim G., who dealt with my many changes and requests to produce a beautiful new look from cover to cover.

On the second point, you'll notice several new sections: Letters on pages 6; ISO News on pages 8; ISO Announcements on page 26; and Calendar on page 29. And don't miss the new "Living in Sobriety" column on page 16, which celebrates fellows with 10-plus years of sobriety.

These additions are all aimed at making *The Outer Circle* more of a newsletter. But your help is needed to bring it to fruition. Please take a look at the boxed areas in the new sections and send in your letters, articles, ideas and events to include in the *TOC*. And please send your feedback on the new look or anything else to [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org).

Together we can make this a change that keeps on getting better.

## Get to Know Your ISO Executive Director

BY JOE H.

**We are on the cusp of several major initiatives that will bring the experience, strength and hope of our members to the many suffering addicts still looking for help.**

My name is Joe, and I currently serve as the Executive Director for the ISO of SAA, Inc. We are the service corporation, which supports the SAA Fellowship.

As a way to improve communications between the ISO and the Fellowship, I'll be sharing challenges I see for our Fellowship in future articles.

First, I want to give you my background. I moved to Houston in 1998 to start a new life because my old one had just exploded. My recovery had begun. Several years into recovery, I began looking for a non-profit organization that helped people. I decided to look at the SAA outreach website — and they were hiring! In 2007, I started filling literature orders part time. After about six months, I was given the opportunity to work full time. In 2009, the board hired me to run the service corporation.

Earlier in my life, I received my bachelor's degree in management. I always had a goal to be a CEO of a corporation. My education and experience had me moving towards this goal — until my two lives collided. All this time I thought I was in control, but my Higher Power had a different path for me. I sure did not expect it would be with the ISO of SAA. I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity serve the Fellowship. It is a humbling experience!

We are on the cusp of several major initiatives that will bring the experience, strength and hope of our members to the many suffering addicts still looking for help. I know when a member finds recovery, not only does his life change but his healing affects all those around him. When we give of ourselves to service, we are changing the world.

## Article Violated SAA Principles

The October/November issue of *The Outer Circle* contained an article titled, “Victim Consciousness: A Primer For Recovering People.” It was also presented as a workshop at our International Convention in 2014. The article was rife with conclusions and theories included in a presentation by Dr. Stephen Karpman in 1968 that was titled, “The Victim Triangle (or Drama Triangle)”.

*TOC* articles should be based on sharing our experience, strength and hope-based on a program of recovery that includes working the Twelve Steps of SAA. The article in question was fraught with professional interpretation and contained little in the way of someone effectively working a program of recovery as described in the Green Book.

In fact, the article seemed to be in clear violation of Tradition Six and possibly Tradition Ten, which are clearly defined principles in our program. The fact that such information was included in a publication of the International Service Organization is not acceptable based on the principles that I have learned during my eighteen years in our program. – **Richard S.**

## Quick Take: Should Inner Circle Behaviors be Shared in Meetings?

*Editor's note: Quick Take invites short responses of around 100 words on an issue of recovery. Next issue's quick take: How can we encourage more women in SAA?*

### Sharing Inner Circle Behaviors Helpful When Done in the Solution

Sharing inner circle behaviors during a meeting should always be optional, as it is in the Portland area. One important factor is the method with which it is done. If it is done explicitly and with no regard to triggering others, of course it could be a bad. What really matters is if you're in the solution (seeing the exact nature of your wrongs with an eye to letting that stuff go) or in the problem. If you need to share the details in order to heal and get help, do so and trust that others will sense your sincerity. If you want attention or are doing it for other reasons, someone's intuition will sense that and the sharer should probably expect to be spoken to by someone after the meeting, as it should be. – **Tony B.**

## Knowing Inner Circle Behaviors Essential to Recovery

The first SAA meeting I went to did not have a custom of sharing inner circle behaviors. There was little sobriety. A typical check in might be “I had a pretty good week and only acted out three times.” I had no idea what challenges my recovery friends were facing. I could not identify an understanding sponsor.

After six months in the dark, a longtime SAA member spoke openly about his inner circle at a meeting and his length of sobriety. I asked him to be my sponsor. Together we started a meeting focused on sharing inner circle behaviors.

I wouldn't say every SAA meeting ought to do this. But it is great to be able to go a meeting with a rigorous focus on sobriety including how we define it. Newcomers attending such a meeting become quickly aware of how important it is to have clear boundaries in order to be successful in recovery. – **John G.**

## Skip Inner Circle Behaviors, Stick to the Twelve Step Solution

Sharing inner circle behaviors does not unify the fellowship nor does it seem to promote the common welfare or group unity outlined in Tradition One.

In my experience going through the laundry list of behaviors has a separation effect. Newcomers need to hear they are among other sex addicts (common problem) and to a much higher degree they need to see and hear a lot of hope that recovery is possible (common solution).

I can't do anything about the behaviors of my past and it could scare, offend, or confuse the newcomer who may or may not even know what the problem is. I am powerless over these behaviors so why bring it up in a long list of negatives? Let's stick to our common solution: the Twelve Steps.

The potential addict will hear all about my story when we work the Steps together or during fellowship before or after the meeting if we aren't working together. The word discernment comes to mind when sharing about inner circle behavior. – **Darren F.**

*Letters to the editor are welcome. Please send your feedback to [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org). Letters may be edited for space and content.*

## Board Approves Motion to Separate Conference from Convention

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Here's a look at ISO Board of Trustees Actions September - November:

### September

- » Approved the official theme for the 2016 SAA convention.
- » Approved strategic goals for the ISO and the Board for the time frame of 2014 to 2020.
- » Approved motion that the ISO International Conference be held independent of the ISO Annual Convention with the implementation date to be determined by the ISO Board of Trustees but not to occur later than May 2019, and that such Conference shall be held in the home city of the ISO office each year.
- » Approved motion to offer a new contract to the Executive Director for two years after the current contract terminates on March 31, 2015.
- » Approved funding for up to twelve Conference Steering Committee members to travel to a mid-year face-to-face meeting in February 2015.

### October

- » Granted permission to print SAA logo on table front banner for use at outreach events attended by Southern Arizona Intergroup's Outreach Committee.

### November

- » Approved job description for the Executive Director for the years 2015-2016.
- » Approved terminating participation of SAA in the Inter-Fellowship Forum website.

## Member Groups Urged to Elect New Group Service Representatives

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*The following letter, along with the necessary forms, is being sent to all member group contacts. If you do not receive the letter and attachments, and would like to register your Group Service Representative (GSR), please contact the ISO office. See contact information at the bottom of the letter!*

Dear member group,

At the 2014 Conference of the International Service Organization (ISO), the delegates ratified two important Bylaws amendments to restructure the ISO. In essence, the delegates voted to change from a system where groups send delegates to the Conference to a system where areas send delegates to the Conference.

Most importantly, the new Bylaws call for the ISO to move from a regional structure to an area structure, with Group Service Representatives (GSRs) attending area assemblies. At the area assemblies, GSRs will elect a single delegate from each area. These delegates will constitute the Conference and attend the annual meeting of the ISO.

In order to begin implementation of this change, the Conference Steering Committee (CSC) requests that each member group elect a Group Service Representative (GSR) to serve as the primary contact person between the group and the International Service Organization (ISO) on matters relating to the ISO and the Fellowship at large. We also ask that each member group elect an alternate GSR to serve in case the elected GSR cannot continue.

Electing a GSR is the key means by which member groups will have a voice in the new service structure, participate in forming group conscience, and carry their views forward to the areas (as areas are established).

Please note that until areas are established, member groups may also elect a delegate to the annual meeting of the Conference (just as they have in the past). Delegates elected directly by the groups will be phased out in the future as the areas become established. For now, your group has several options: 1) you may elect one person to serve as both GSR and delegate; 2) you may elect one person to serve as a GSR and another as a delegate; or 3) if your group will not send a delegate to the Conference this year, you may elect a GSR only.

We strongly encourage you to elect a GSR and become involved in the service structure even if your group has never sent a delegate to the Conference (due to lack of time, funds, information, or interest). The GSR position offers a way for groups that may have felt disenfranchised or disconnected in the past to have a say and to contribute to the group conscience of our Fellowship.

Tradition Four gives each member group autonomy in determining the qualifications for their GSR; however, the CSC strongly recommends that each group choose a person who has worked the Twelve Steps with a sponsor, is familiar with the Twelve Traditions, and has been abstinent from inner-circle behavior for a significant period of time. We recommend using the guidelines for international service for delegates as a guide.

*Continued on page 10*

## GSR Elections, (Continued from Page 9)

Only through wide representation of member groups at area assemblies can the ISO Conference become the effective voice of the group conscience of the fellowship as a whole. Registering your GSR and your alternate GSR now will also permit your group to have more of a voice in the area formation process being developed now, including participating in creating your local area.

For this reason, we encourage your group to elect a GSR and an alternate GSR and submit your GSR registration form as soon as possible.

If you have questions, please contact the ISO office at [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org) or call the office at (713) 869-4902 or (800) 477-8191. You may also contact the CSC directly at [csc.feedback@saa-iso.org](mailto:csc.feedback@saa-iso.org). A member of the CSC will get back to you by phone or email.

In service, Elizabeth S., Chair, CSC 2014-2015

## ISO Financial Results for November '14 Show Surplus

In the month of November the ISO had a surplus of \$22,030.38. It had budgeted for a surplus of \$8,867. The increase in surplus of \$13,163.38 was mainly due to an anonymous individual donation of \$12,000.00.

Gross sales revenue for the SAA Green Book exceeded estimates by \$2,245.60 for November and has exceeded estimates by \$8,759.33 for 2014.

Pamphlet and booklet sales exceeded estimates by \$333.60 for November and have exceeded estimates by \$12,200.61 for 2014.

Bronze medallion sales were below estimate by \$160.00 in November but have exceeded estimate by \$3,853.20 in 2014. Plastic chip sales exceeded estimate by \$397.35 in November and have exceeded estimate by \$2,767.02 in 2014.

Total sales for November exceeded estimate by \$2,405.54.



Individual donations exceeded estimate by \$14,037.42 for November and have exceeded estimate by \$46,622.07 for 2014. Group donations were below estimate by \$2,267.31 in November and are below estimate by \$14,095.33 for 2014.

Product inventory is valued at \$49,025.54.

Our expenses were over estimate by \$280.42 in November.

Summary of the annual budget (January 1, 2014 to November 30, 2014):

- » Gross sales have exceeded our estimate by \$27,031.99
- » Donations have exceeded our estimate by \$32,526.74
- » Expenses are under our estimate by \$25,706.72

Our operational reserve is fully funded.

If you have questions about the financial results, please contact Joe H. at [director@saa-iso.org](mailto:director@saa-iso.org).

## Daily Meditation Book, Outreach Update on '15 Project List

The ISO recently released a list of projects for 2015 in its annual appeal letter. Here's a look at what's in store:

- » Writing and editing the second half of our meditation book – daily meditations written by SAA members, based on quotes from SAA literature.
- » Developing new translations along with the policy and process to support our international recovery community.
- » Upgrading our information technology infrastructure so we can maximize our outreach efforts: to tell our story – to bring the message of recovery – and to support SAA groups in their efforts to carry that message in their own communities.
- » Re-writing our Outreach website to focus our message toward people who are looking for help for sexual addiction, to make it easier to find local meetings, and to use new technology to be more visible and responsive to young adults.

# DEAR GRACE

## A 'Right' Way to Recover?

BY WOMEN'S  
OUTREACH  
SUBCOMMITTEE

We can learn to respect that there are many paths on this road to recovery, and our task is to find the one that works for us.

Dear Grace:

I'm confused. Our Green Book says that there is no one right way to work the Steps and to get sexually sober, but I've attended several different meetings where I've heard that if you don't do things in just a certain way, you are not going to be able to get abstinent or stay abstinent. How can this be?

**Befuddled**

Dear Befuddled,

Twelve-Step fellowships are based on the knowledge and experience of those who have come before, and listening with an open mind can give us the opportunity to avoid certain mistakes others have made and adopt ideas, which have been successful. It is human nature to think that our way is the only way. However, there isn't an "only way." Our book is very clear on this point: "There is no one correct or SAA-sanctioned way to complete the Twelve Steps" (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 20). Remembering that we all come to SAA seeking a solution to our problem of sex addiction, we can learn to respect that there are many paths on this road to recovery and our task is to find the one that works for us.

Let's look at this question, using the Serenity Prayer as our guide. God, grant me the serenity to:

**1. Accept the things I cannot change.** Sometimes strong personalities can dominate a meeting and make it difficult to work the program in a way that makes sense to everyone attending the meeting. Remember that the only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior (Tradition Three). Those who seem controlling and



opinionated have a place in SAA too. We find it best to follow the guidance of our sponsor in how we work our program.

**2. Change the things I can.** If your meeting is costing your serenity, perhaps you can look for meetings in other towns, attend telemeetings or web meetings. There are many styles of meetings and you may meet addicts using a different format from your local meeting. Once you have achieved a measure of recovery in SAA, perhaps you and another trusted member can start a new meeting in your area or even suggest a study of the Twelve Traditions in your own meeting.

**3. And the wisdom to know the difference.** We have found that it is important to work the Twelve Steps of SAA in order to receive relief from our addictive sexual behavior, as well as find peace and serenity in our lives.

Difficult situations in SAA are a time of reflection and inventory (Step Four).

Seeking guidance from a Higher Power, sponsor and other members of the Fellowship will give you the wisdom to know if this is something you can or cannot change.

**Blessings in your recovery,**

Grace

*Statement of Purpose for Dear Grace: To reach out to all women with a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior through this printed medium and share with the fellowship the types of questions the Grace e-mail (grace@saa-women.org) receives. \*Names have been changed to protect anonymity.\**

# DEAR WILL

## Powerless vs. Unmanageable: A Closer Look

BY WILL

**‘We were powerless’ and ‘our lives had become unmanageable’ actually mean two very different things.**

### Dear Will:

I’m fairly new to the program, and I still don’t know if I am a sex addict. I can’t identify with what others have said about their addictions. How can I tell if I am a sex addict?

### Don’t Know

### Dear DK:

Will can identify with your question, as he didn’t know for certain either. When he came into the program, he read the recommended literature since there was no Green Book back then, and couldn’t find behaviors to identify with. Still, knowing his life was messed up, he hung in there.

Will was confused by the First Step because he thought that “powerless” and “unmanageable” were interchangeable. This is because he had never read the words in context. “We were powerless” and “our lives had become unmanageable” actually mean two very different things.

“Will was powerless.” This word has to do with the behavior itself: Will could not resist that urge to act out. When it got to be eleven p.m., he could not stay home. His legs carried him to the car, and the car had a mind of its own as he began that trek to his favorite acting out spot. Once there, Will would try to set boundaries, such as not staying past two a.m. He almost never actually observed these boundaries, and found himself driving back home at six a.m., just barely in time to make it to work at eight. Will sometimes tried to white-knuckle it and make himself go to bed at a reasonable hour, but he would find himself waking up and looking at the clock to decide whether it was still worth it to



get out there and try to act out, usually deciding that it was.

“Will’s life had become unmanageable.” This phrase is about the effects the behavior was having on Will’s life. His life was unmanageable because he was falling asleep at work, having been out the entire night before without sleep. Will’s primary financial issues surrounding his addiction were the money he was spending for gas. However, he could easily have had major financial issues from his two confrontations with the cops.

So, to summarize: Powerlessness has to do with the Will’s behavior itself. Unmanageability has to do with the effects on Will’s life.

Will suggests that your determination as to whether these terms apply to you carry more weight than whether what you hear in meetings or read in books

parallel your behavior. Will, always the nonconformist, never heard much about his specific behaviors in meetings. However, he did figure out that he was powerless over his addiction and that his life was unmanageable.

So Will suggests, DK, that you take a close look at these two words and see if they apply to you. In the meantime, keep going to meetings and see if the underlying feelings you experience match up with the feelings others express. You should then be able to answer your own question.

### Will

*Will, a member of the currently inactive Men’s Outreach Committee, is seeking fellows who can help get the committee active again. Please contact him at [men4saa@saa-recovery.org](mailto:men4saa@saa-recovery.org).*



# LIVING IN SOBRIETY

## The Keys to Long-Term Sobriety

BY ANONYMOUS

**To this day, I attend meetings, and have a home group. If I am ever wondering if I should attend a meeting, I put an end to my mental debate, and I go.**

I have been abstinent from my inner circle behaviors for more than fourteen years.

How have I achieved sobriety?

From one point of view, I haven't, exactly. All I have is today. I haven't graduated or earned something like an advanced degree, or a black belt. What I experience today is a gift. With the gift of sobriety comes a responsibility to continue to make steady effort as if my life depended on it.

I use the words "as if," but in fact, my life does depend on my sobriety. Without my sobriety being a top priority from one day to the next, I wouldn't be alive. My addiction has fatal consequences if it is not arrested.

How does my addiction show up? What behaviors do I avoid? My inner circle includes, but is not limited to: pornography; compulsive masturbation; sex outside of a committed dating relationship; pursuit of unavailable persons

I have honored my inner circle for five-thousand-two hundred-ninety-two days — more than fourteen years.

When I began recovery from sex addiction in 1996, I was already familiar with the Twelve Steps. Sexual recovery wasn't my first, or even second, program. After two years of complete abstinence from masturbation, I had a slip, and I had lots of difficulty putting together any consecutive sobriety time.

One evening I was attending a sexual recovery meeting of another fellowship, and met a gentleman who suggested I try a meeting for newcomers in SAA. I went, and I stayed. I kept coming back. To this day, I attend meetings, and have a home group. If I am ever wondering if I should attend a meeting, I put an end to my mental debate, and I go.

I have worked the Steps with a sponsor, and I sponsor others to work the Steps. I volunteer for service positions, and support business meetings. I read and study SAA literature, and encourage others to do the same. I have attended some International SAA Conventions, and many annual retreats in our region. I've even had the pleasure of attending SAA while overseas for business.

After more than three years in SAA, I met with my sponsor to address the option of adding healthy masturbation to my outer circle. He encouraged me to use "outside help" to clarify what that activity would look like for me. The insights from a professional sex therapist were invaluable. My healthy experience involves self-respect and prayer. The therapist also emphasized the importance of balanced self-care: rest, nutrition, exercise.

To this day I strive for adequate sleep at night (and quick naps at points in my active day, if they are ever an option), a nourishing diet, and cardiovascular/strength activity for my body.

For years, I've emphasized these three components of healthy living with sponsors. Working with another addict is a very rewarding experience that also strongly supports my own sobriety.

Fellowship activity with other SAA members — whether enjoying some casual dining, taking a hike, watching events, playing board games — these have

all helped me live a more engaged and fulfilling social life. I replace destructive isolation with new experiences altogether, walking briskly to my outer circle.

My greatest outer-circle activity has been pursuing a life-long dream of working as a musician. Outside of my current professional career, I have outfitted a music studio space, and I continue to grow as a musician. I have Twelve Step recovery to thank, as these experiences would have been literally impossible to accomplish on my own.

My life in recovery as a musician is closely interdependent with my respect for a Power greater than myself, and the quiet time I spend daily is a fundamental piece of my sober living.

Prayer is an experience I live and breathe, and I am very attracted to it throughout my day. I am never shy to mention prayer and the abundance of the universe with my colleagues in recovery.

I continue to be amazed how any efforts we make never go unnoticed by the universe; they are always rewarded. My plan for recovery continues: Keep coming back and showing up, one day at a time!

*If you have ten or more years of sobriety and would like to celebrate by writing a Living in Sobriety column, please contact [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org).*



# A Place at the Table

**A loving Higher Power and the Twelve Step solution moved this fellow from shame to grace**

BY ALLAN O.

**W**hen my wife was pregnant with our first child, I told her that I'd had sex with other men and was worried about infecting her and/or the baby.

There was no AIDS epidemic at that time, so I got tested for STDs and was relieved to find that I didn't have any. Although my wife was concerned about my behavior, she accepted my assurances that I loved her and that our family was of highest importance. Through more than twenty years of marriage, no-

body other than my wife and numerous therapists knew about my sexuality. It was personal and complicated, and it took many years before isolated incidents became more compulsive. I considered myself bisexual for the rest of the marriage and then gay after my wife and I split up.

I came out to my sons when my male partner and I got together. They were loving and supportive, and they and my friends accepted my life companion while, in turn, his family and friends embraced our relationship. But this isn't one of those heartwarming stories of a closeted man coming out and finding meaning and fulfillment in a gay relationship.

My negative self-image and low self-esteem kept telling me that being gay was inferior. At the same time, my arrogant belief that I was unique and could do whatever I wanted kept driving me to seek anonymous male sex and conceal these activities from my partner. I knew that experiencing my sexuality in this way could lead to my spiritual and physical death, and hours of counseling couldn't help me fight the obsession. It wasn't until I discovered Sex Addicts Anonymous — and the Twelve Step solution it offered — that I was finally able to overcome my powerlessness.

The most important gift of the program is that I'm now more than five years sober from my inner circle behaviors. Free from the shame and guilt of my double life, I can be present with family,

friends and strangers and relate to them without defenses. Most importantly, I can be with my partner, confident that he shares my innermost thoughts.

Working the steps has given me a new way to understand myself and my sexuality — and there have been revelations and surprises all along the way. Committing to each of the steps as they came up, I gained important insights as I followed my sponsor's guidance. Even though I resisted the idea of Step Nine, I trusted in the wisdom of the program,

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**I'm now more than five years sober from my inner circle behaviors. Free from the shame and guilt of my double life, I can be present with family, friends and strangers and relate to them without defenses.**

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and the mysterious and frightening step became a way to heal wounds caused by my addiction.

Every day I depend on my Higher Power to help me deal with my life honestly and gratefully. I'll always be a sex addict, but now I'm living in recovery.

A poem by George Herbert in the 17th

century speaks of the spiritual side of my recovery. It's called "Love." I became familiar with it in a choral setting at the church I attend. I find the presence of my Higher Power in this dialogue when Love invites the poet to a banquet.

*Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,*

*Guilty of dust and sin.*

*But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack*

*From my first entrance in,*

*Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning*

*If I lack'd anything.*

*'A guest,' I answer'd, 'worthy to be here:'*

*Love said, 'You shall be he.'*

*'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,*

*I cannot look on Thee.'*

*Love took my hand and smiling did reply,*

*'Who made the eyes but I?'*

*'Truth, Lord; but I have marr'd them: let my shame*

*Go where it doth deserve.'*

*'And know you not,' says Love, 'Who bore the blame?'*

*'My dear, then I will serve.'*

*'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'*

*So I did sit and eat.*

This is, to me, a beautiful expression

of the recovery process, starting with shame and ending with grace. The poet believes that his depraved state inevitably leads to condemnation, but Love insists that a Higher Power has taken care of that. The part that really tears me up is at the end when the poet is made to realize that he is a worthy guest at the banquet. Still, his response is, okay — then I'll be a server at the feast.

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**My Higher Power provides the bread and wine, and I have a place at the table. As a gay man, I'm a full and equal part of our society.**

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Love says no, you must sit at the table and eat.

My Higher Power provides the bread and wine, and I have a place at the table. As a gay man, I'm a full and equal participant in our society — not a servant, not an outsider.

In our fellowship, we say the Serenity Prayer with our eyes uplifted, signifying our movement from shame to grace. We ask for serenity to accept the things that can't be changed, courage to change the things that can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Let's enjoy the feast of life!



# The Pieces of Healthier Sexuality

## A fellow discovers how treatment and SAA fit together

BY HARVEY A.

**D**

iscovering SAA's path toward healthier sexuality offered a breakthrough for me in prison, where I was serving time for sex offenses. Prior to that, I was caught in addictive sexual behavior that inevitably led to illegal sexual activity (sexual fantasy about children). I used this with masturbation to medicate the boredom, drudgery, and depression of incarceration, while serving time for a non-sexual offense.

SAA helped me to work on this problem without the availability of formal treatment — preparing me for release, and restoring a degree of freedom, and sanity to my soul that was previously unknown. It also prepared me for outside help through treatment, where I'm learning to apply SAA's principles of healthier sexuality. Through this process I'm discovering how well treatment and SAA work together to help me understand what healthier sexuality is for me.

SAA got me started on that path. As I moved from active sexual addiction to sexual sobriety, I was offered a concept of healthier sexuality, which is outlined in *Sex Addicts Anonymous* on page 71. "Many of us recognize healthier sexuality when we experience something very different from what we knew in our addiction. We don't feel compulsive, driven or off in another world. Instead we are emotionally present during sexual activity."

For me, SAA's concept of healthier sexuality is something only a true sex addict can fully appreciate.

I also learned in SAA that boundaries are a key to healthier sexuality. That means I put limits on the behavior I engage in and respect the limits of others.

Having these boundaries has allowed me to discover who I am, which is discussed on page 73 of the Green Book. "The promise of recovery is a restoration of self. Sexuality is a part of what we are, a part that became lost and distorted through our addiction. When we reclaim the possibility of healthier sexuality, we regain a vital aspect of our being ... and try to make sexuality an appropriate part of our life." Still, I know that in SAA, the definition of healthier sexuality is ultimately up to me.

When treatment became available for me toward the end of my sentence, I found it was not inconsistent with what I learned in SAA. It also offered a lot of useful information I had not encountered in SAA, which helped me understand what healthier sexuality means to me. For me, information I learned in treatment about how to monitor myself, cope with life and avoid committing a new sexual offense was quite helpful. Parts of what I learned were even put into my outer circle.

In treatment healthy sexuality mandates no more victims or sex crimes. It also taught me about sexual values, disease, gender identity, and family of origin

issues. This is not the same as healthy sexuality concepts in SAA, but these lessons are not inconsistent with it either.

I have found information from both of these programs is useful and complements my full recovery from different perspectives.

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**When treatment became available to me, I found it was not inconsistent with what I learned in SAA, which helped me understand what healthier sexuality means to me.**

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For example, I did not have sex education when I went to school, and my caregivers were uncomfortable discussing sex with me as a child. So I am catching up on things about sex I never knew. I'm learning about sexually transmitted infections — how they are transmitted, recognized prevented or treated. I'm understanding the difference between "safe," risky and unsafe sexual practices.

As I continue with my treatment, I'm rediscovering ideas about healthy sexuality I first heard about from SAA members:

- » Sexuality is a natural and healthy part of living
- » All people are sexual
- » Sexuality includes physical, ethical, spiritual, psychological and emotional dimensions
- » Every person has dignity and self worth
- » Individuals express their sexuality in varied ways
- » Sexual relationships should never be coercive or exploitative
- » All children should be able to live their lives without fear of being abused
- » All sexual decisions have effects and consequences
- » All persons have the right and obligation to make responsible sexual choices
- » Premature involvement in sexual behaviors poses risks
- » Abstaining from sexual intercourse is the most effective method of preventing pregnancy and STDs

I continue to learn and understand more about myself — how to avoid committing another sex offense and have a happier life. I feel like God is using this program and SAA to help me do what I could not do on my own, and it has been a wonderful blessing to be able to take advantage of both SAA and treatment.

## Prisoner

By Paul P.

*Live free today  
Guide every act  
Watch over me too  
Remind me of the fact.*

*Captive am I  
Imprisoned by my ways  
Free me from the hold  
A stronger foundation lays*

*Lighten my thoughts,  
Embolden a damaged spirit,  
Courage replacing fear  
Unfamiliar but must hear it.*

*Open my heart and mind,  
Unlock the chambers inside  
Infuse me with hope  
A willing self will abide.*

*Replace the old patterns,  
Introduce healthy things  
Freed from the restricting  
A welcomed relief this brings*

*Free at last  
Choices I never saw  
Chains finally released  
Feeling alive not raw.*



# Committed to the Traditions

## What can embracing the spirit of Tradition Nine bring to a relationship?

BY FREEMAN D.

**T**radition Nine: “SAA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

Disorganized organization—ironic how this works. No leaders, only people in service of the whole. Our Green Book tells us “...we are all equal members...” and “...our groups function best when we rely on spiritual principles...” (page 90)

So how does an SAA group know who is best to serve? From Tradition Two, we learned that a group may vote, believing that this is not “the will of the group” (page 80), rather “...it is the will of our Higher Power as expressed through the group.”

Once elected to a service position, it is vital for me to remember I am here to serve, not to dictate and set myself up as the boss. I gain a sense of responsibility, recognizing I am accountable to each and every member in the group, in SAA.

Only through patience and humility will I be an effective servant. Only through applying — practicing — our spiritual principles are we able to insure the continued growth of SAA. Failing to do so will ultimately lead to discord, a return of our dreaded disease and certain death.

### Tradition Nine — Relationship Form

Our relationship ought never be organized or under the control of one person.

Just as our recovery takes commitment, so do our relationships take commitment — an extraordinary commitment that goes beyond rational explanation, without reservation. Recognizing that neither of us is in charge, we have a mutual relationship where we have chosen to unite together so we may handle life as it comes.

We each decide what is right for ourselves. Then, together, through service, we decide what is right for our relation-

ship.

I willingly choose to yield, to serve, not to be dominated, but rather, to willingly mold myself to meet the needs of the relationship. I realize that there are infinite ways to be of service. Through service, I am able to express not only my commitment, but also my love.

Love is an action. My mate and those around us know we love each other and are committed to each other because we treat each other with compassion, in service one to the other, whether it's a comfortable fit or a tedious one.

*Editor's note: This is an ongoing series on relationships and the Twelve Traditions.*

## Voices of Recovery

“Any small effort we make to slow down and listen is a step towards connecting with our Higher Power, and will bear fruit in time.” —*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 57

Step Eleven encourages us to meditate. There are many ways to meditate, but those who meditate tell us that it is a foundation for spiritual health and the path to true peace and happiness.

To meditate means to be connected to, and present in, an immediate reality. No fantasies, please. No grandiose delusions about how powerful I am. No self-judging conclusions about the shamefulness of acting out.

Meditation is a practice, a behavior. Its power comes not from what I do, but from being still and open to what is — a world far removed from the beliefs and fears that drove my addiction. And they're right; I can find peace.

*Addiction is mindless action. Meditation is meaningful stillness.*

*This is an excerpt from the booklet, “Voices of Recovery: Meditations on the Steps and Traditions.” Submissions are needed to help create a daily meditation book.*

*For more information including how to submit a meditation, see page 26.*

## *The Outer Circle* Seeks Regional Reports from Members

*The Outer Circle* seeks to include more news and information about what's happening in the different regions of SAA. The regions are listed on page 28. *The Outer Circle* also welcomes reports from area Intergroups about events or happenings in the area worth note.

The goal of Regional Reports is to show the vibrancy of the program — and share ideas about activities, workshops and other efforts member groups are making to share the message of recovery.

If you are interested in being a regular contributor of Regional Reports to *The Outer Circle*, please contact the editor at [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org).

## New Compulsive Sexual Avoidance Meetings Available

The Compulsive Sexual Avoidance (Anorexia) Outreach Committee would like to announce that in order to simplify and to more fully follow the Twelve Traditions of SAA, all intimacy-avoidance-focused meetings now share the same meeting contact email address: [SaaAnorexiaTelemeetings@gmail.com](mailto:SaaAnorexiaTelemeetings@gmail.com), a single email account accessible by several meeting representatives. As a result, all of the meetings are now listed as “Sexual Avoidance” on the websites [saatalk.info](http://saatalk.info) and [saa-recovery.org](http://saa-recovery.org).

However, each meeting is autonomous and unique. There are a few new meetings, including one for people who struggle with intimacy avoidance or sexual anorexia who are in a committed partnership; two new women's intimacy avoidance meetings; and a mixed-gender check-in meeting.

For a list of sexual avoidance/anorexia-focused meetings, visit [saatalk.info](http://saatalk.info) and click on any “Sexual Avoidance” meeting. After the “document download” section is a “further details” section, which lists the meetings and their days and times. (It's not linked yet, but call-in numbers and access codes are listed on each meeting's [saatalk.info](http://saatalk.info) page.)

## Submissions Sought for SAA Meditation Book

The ISO Literature Committee welcomes submission for the SAA meditation book, which will consist of 366 entries for each day of the calendar year. To ensure consideration, submissions should follow these guidelines:

A short quotation should be taken from SAA publications that are Literature Committee or Conference approved (see below). The quote must be exact and followed by a citation that includes the name of the publication and page number, using the following style: Sex Addicts Anonymous, p. 20. Submissions using quotes from other sources will not be considered.



The main body of the entry should be a thought-provoking expansion of the topic or principle expressed in the quotation, ideally including some fresh perspective on a particular aspect of SAA recovery. We are looking for your experience, strength, hope, and voice. Please note that we have found that using “I” rather than “we” in the body of the meditation makes for a stronger message.

At the bottom of the page, a concise statement in the author's own words should summarize the main idea of the meditation or offer a poignant challenge or affirmation. Each entry should be a maximum of 275 words including the quotation and the closing affirmation, so that each meditation will fit on a single page. Multiple entries may address slightly different aspects of the same subject.

Submissions must include your name and contact information and be accompanied by a signed release (see p. 30). By signing the release, the author grants the ISO of SAA, Inc. sole rights to edit, alter, publish, or reject any submission. A blank release form is available in this newsletter or may be obtained from the ISO office or downloaded and printed from the SAA website.

**SAA Approved Literature:** *Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Book); Abstinence and Boundaries in SAA; First Step to Recovery; Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous; Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Pamphlet); Sexual Sobriety and the Internet; Abstinence; The Bubble; Writing to Prisoners; Group Guide; Intergroup Guide; Three Circles; Tools of Recovery; Getting a Sponsor; A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer; Recovery from Compulsive Sexual Avoidance; Safe & Sexually Sober Meetings; SAA and the Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual / Transgender Sex Addict*

# CONTACT THE ISO

Want to connect with the International Service Organization website, staff, board of trustees, trusted servants or special workers? Here's the contact info you need:

## Office

ISO Office Mailing Address:  
PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

Phone: 713-869-4902 -or- 800-477-8191  
Fax: 713-692-0105

Office e-mail: [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org)  
The Outer Circle e-mail: [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org)  
Website: [www.saa-recovery.org](http://www.saa-recovery.org)

## The Outer Circle

Editor: Gary T. [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org)

## Board of Trustees and Literature Committee

### Great Lakes

Board: Stephen N.; Alternate: Vacant  
[BoardGL@saa-recovery.org](mailto:BoardGL@saa-recovery.org)  
LitCom: Cecila B.; Alternate: Steve W.  
[LitComGL@saa-litcom.org](mailto:LitComGL@saa-litcom.org)

### Intermountain

Board: Kelley K.; Alternate: Bob H.  
[BoardIM@saa-recovery.org](mailto:BoardIM@saa-recovery.org)  
LitCom: Raymond W.; Alternate: Allen H.  
[LitComIM@saa-litcom.org](mailto:LitComIM@saa-litcom.org)

### North Central

Board: Tim T.; Alternate: Bob L.  
[BoardNC@saa-recovery.org](mailto:BoardNC@saa-recovery.org)  
LitCom: John W.; Alternate: Harold P.  
[LitComNC@saa-litcom.org](mailto:LitComNC@saa-litcom.org)

### Northeast

Board: Wayne K. (Treasurer); Alternate: Carl D.  
[BoardNE@saa-recovery.org](mailto:BoardNE@saa-recovery.org)  
LitCom: Kashi B.; Alternate: Tim W.  
[LitComNE@saa-litcom.org](mailto:LitComNE@saa-litcom.org)

### North Pacific

Board: Bill I. (Chair); Alternate: Clif G.  
[BoardNP@saa-recovery.org](mailto:BoardNP@saa-recovery.org)  
LitCom: Steven P. (Chair); Alternate: Vacant  
[LitComNP@saa-litcom.org](mailto:LitComNP@saa-litcom.org)

## Office Staff

Executive Director: Joe H: [director@saa-iso.org](mailto:director@saa-iso.org)  
Associate Director: Chris F: [chrisf@saa-iso.org](mailto:chrisf@saa-iso.org)  
Information Technician: Jonathan C: [webmaster@saa-recovery.org](mailto:webmaster@saa-recovery.org)  
Information Technician: D. J. B: [djb@saa-iso.org](mailto:djb@saa-iso.org)  
Administrative Assistant : Philip A: [philip@saa-iso.org](mailto:philip@saa-iso.org)  
Administrative Assistant : Jerry B: [jerry@saa-iso.org](mailto:jerry@saa-iso.org)  
Prisoner Outreach: Jonathan C: [outreach@saa-recovery.org](mailto:outreach@saa-recovery.org)

The ISO of SAA Board of Trustees also has an e-mail box, which may be used to register comments, positive or negative, from the fellowship about the ISO staff: [oochair@saa-recovery.org](mailto:oochair@saa-recovery.org).

### South Central

Board: Paul M. (Vice-Secretary); Alternate: Bryan H.  
[BoardSC@saa-recovery.org](mailto:BoardSC@saa-recovery.org)  
LitCom: Tracy R.; Alternate: Elizabeth S.  
[LitComSC@saa-litcom.org](mailto:LitComSC@saa-litcom.org)

### Southeast

Board: Tom W.; Alternate: John J.  
[BoardSE@saa-recovery.org](mailto:BoardSE@saa-recovery.org)  
LitCom: John R.; Alternate: David M.  
[LitComSE@saa-litcom.org](mailto:LitComSE@saa-litcom.org)

### Southern Pacific

Board: Antonio B.; Alternate: Wayne B.  
[BoardSP@saa-recovery.org](mailto:BoardSP@saa-recovery.org)  
LitCom: Carole D.; Alternate: James D.  
[LitComSP@saa-litcom.org](mailto:LitComSP@saa-litcom.org)

### At Large

Board: Jim L. (Vice-Chair); Richard S.; Doug C. (Secretary)  
[BoardAL@saa-recovery.org](mailto:BoardAL@saa-recovery.org)  
LitCom: Les J. (Secretary); Garrett I. (Second Chair); Bruce M.  
[LitComAL@saa-litcom.org](mailto:LitComAL@saa-litcom.org)

# CALENDAR

Here's a look at what's happening in January and February.  
All times are Eastern Standard Time.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Jan. 4</b> Audio Review Committee, 3:30 pm                             | <b>Feb. 1</b> Audio Review Committee, 3:30 pm                           |
| <b>Jan. 4</b> Compulsive Sexual Avoidance Committee, 2 pm                 | <b>Feb. 1</b> Compulsive Sexual Avoidance Committee, 2 pm               |
| <b>Jan. 4</b> LGBT Outreach Committee, 8 pm                               | <b>Feb. 1</b> LGBT Outreach Committee, 8 pm                             |
| <b>Jan. 4</b> Conference Steering Committee — Area Formation, 2 pm        | <b>Feb. 1</b> Conference Steering Committee — Area Formation, 2 pm      |
| <b>Jan. 10</b> Author's Group, 5:30 pm                                    | <b>Feb. 13</b> Author's Group, 5:30 pm                                  |
| <b>Jan. 10</b> Women's Outreach Committee, 5 pm                           | <b>Feb. 13</b> Women's Outreach Committee, 5 pm                         |
| <b>Jan. 11</b> Literature Committee, 3 pm                                 | <b>Feb. 14</b> Literature Committee, 3 pm                               |
| <b>Jan. 11</b> General Outreach Committee, 7:30 pm                        | <b>Feb. 14</b> General Outreach Committee, 7:30 pm                      |
| <b>Jan. 11</b> Conference Steering Committee — Nominating, 5 pm           | <b>Feb. 14</b> Conference Steering Committee — Nominating, 5 pm         |
| <b>Jan. 15</b> 2016 Convention Committee, 8 pm                            | <b>Feb. 17</b> Prisoner Outreach Committee, 9 pm                        |
| <b>Jan. 17</b> 2015 Convention Committee, 8:30 am                         | <b>Feb. 17</b> Seventh Tradition Committee, 7 pm                        |
| <b>Jan. 18</b> Inter-Fellowship Relations, 4 pm                           | <b>Feb. 19</b> 2016 Convention Committee, 8 pm                          |
| <b>Jan. 18</b> Information Systems and Online Presence Committee, 3 pm    | <b>Feb. 19</b> 2015 Convention Committee, 8:30 pm                       |
| <b>Jan. 18</b> Conference Steering Committee — Policy & Procedure, 2 pm   | <b>Feb. 21</b> Inter-Fellowship Relations, 4 pm                         |
| <b>Jan. 18</b> SE Region Committee, 7 pm                                  | <b>Feb. 21</b> Information Systems and Online Presence Committee, 3 pm  |
| <b>Jan. 24</b> Portland Area Intergroup Speaker Meeting/Workshop, 2:30 pm | <b>Feb. 21</b> Conference Steering Committee — Policy & Procedure, 2 pm |
| <b>Jan. 20</b> Prisoner Outreach Committee, 9 pm                          | <b>Feb. 21</b> SE Region Committee, 7 pm                                |
| <b>Jan. 20</b> Seventh Tradition Committee, 7 pm                          | <b>Feb. 22</b> Conference Steering Committee, 3 pm                      |
| <b>Jan. 25</b> Conference Steering Committee, 3 pm                        | <b>Feb. 22</b> Meditation Writing Workshop, 6 pm                        |
| <b>Jan. 25</b> Meditation Writing Workshop, 6 pm                          | <b>Apr. 24-26</b> Gulf Coast Region Intergroup Retreat                  |

To attend a committee meeting you must be a member or be invited. If you're interested in joining a committee, email [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org). If you'd like your event to be listed in the Calendar section, please send it to [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org). To ensure your listing gets published in time, please send it no less than two months in advance of the event.

# SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

# SAA TWELVE STEPS

## Get Your Story Published in The Outer Circle

The *Outer Circle* newsletter relies on submissions from the Fellowship. It's a great way to carry the message to other sex addicts!

Articles may be submitted by email to: [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org) or by mail to the ISO office. If possible please submit articles via email in Microsoft Word format. All articles must be accompanied by the **RELEASE FORM**, at the bottom of this page.

### Here are some general writing guidelines:

Personal stories can be anywhere from 500-1,000 words. The main guideline is to share your experience, strength and hope in the principle of Step Twelve. It may be helpful to think of your submission as a written form of a share you'd give in a meeting — something that's working for you or that you're struggling with.

Also, please consider writing a 500-1,000-word article based on a workshop or talk you've given around the Steps and Traditions. Again, the key is sharing your experience, strength and hope with other sex addicts. Please don't worry about grammar and spelling. We'll clean that up for you.

### Deadlines for Submission

Mar/April:	Jan 5
May/June:	Mar 5
July/Aug:	May 5
Sept/Oct:	July 5
Nov/Dec:	Sept 5

### General Release Form

In consideration of being reviewed for possible publication, I hereby transfer and release to the ISO of SAA, Inc (assignee) all legal rights to the publication of my submission(s) or any edited version thereof in any official ISO publication, including Sex Addicts Anonymous, The Outer Circle, the SAA meditation book, the SAA websites, or any other SAA program material, such as pamphlets, booklets and audio recordings.

With this submission, I transfer to the assignee without limitation the legal title and all literary rights, including copyright and/or trademark and the full right and license to reproduce, copy, edit for content, modify, distribute, and create derivatives from the submitted work. I understand that every effort will be made to safeguard my personal anonymity in the publication and distribution of this material. I also understand that I may or may not receive further communication regarding my submission prior to its publication.

I hereby further attest that I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization, and I hereby Release the assignee from any claim whatsoever by me or my successors.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - 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 God as we understood God, 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 other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.