

Explanation of Revisions

Sex Addicts Anonymous, Third Edition.

In 2007, the Second Edition of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* was brought before the Delegate Conference for approval. This was the first time the book was brought before the Delegate Conference, and it was narrowly defeated. The ISO Literature Committee spent the next five years gathering feedback from the fellowship and working on a third edition vis-à-vis surveys from the fellowship and work groups comprised of Literature Committee members and concerned members of the fellowship.

The ISO Literature Committee passed the following changes in May 2012 for the Third Edition of *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, and the third edition has been under the process of review and feedback since that time.

The ISO Literature Committee intends to bring a motion to the 2016 Conference for approval of the third edition.

Summary of changes:

1. Foreword to the Third Edition – clarifies the purpose and scope of the book.
2. Changes to the section on the Eleventh Tradition – tightened previous wording regarding showing our faces in public media when speaking on behalf of the Fellowship.
3. “The Steps Are the Spiritual Solution” added after the first ninety-eight pages – an inspired piece written to clarify that our program is based on the Twelve Steps and is spiritual in nature.
4. Deletion of an old story – deleted due to an emphasis on the addiction rather than the solution.
5. Addition of a new story – a new story that was found to be well grounded in working the Twelve Steps.

Details of changes:

1. ADD THE FOREWORD (after Table of Contents, before Introduction, page viii)

Foreword to *Sex Addicts Anonymous, Third Edition*

The book you hold in your hands, the first full-length book by the fellowship of *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, was produced in response to the expressed need of our members for a text providing an overview of our program of recovery from sexual addiction.

It includes descriptions of our addiction as we have experienced it; the purpose and structure of our groups; the vital importance of sponsorship as a guide through the program; the process by which members define their abstinence from addictive sexual behaviors; and the Twelve Steps of SAA. Other areas of interest included are various “tools” used by members; and the Twelve Traditions of SAA, which guide our groups and their service committees in the task of carrying our message of

recovery. Following the text, we have included personal stories from members sharing their experience, strength, and hope regarding their addiction and recovery.

This book was not intended to be a complete instructional workbook covering every aspect of working the steps. As we grow in experience and wisdom, we trust that more literature will be written to address the developing needs of our fellowship as they are expressed.

The ultimate tool of recovery is the recovering sex addict. Our commitment to helping other sex addicts seeking recovery, and our working together towards that common goal, carry the message of SAA more than any piece of literature could. Each member's experience of working the steps ultimately determines how recovery looks. Here we must emphasize what is often stated in the text itself: the importance of working with a sponsor in order to gain the full benefits of our program. Not alone, but together, through a Power greater than ourselves, we can and do recover from sexual addiction.

In this faith, in the spirit of selfless service, and with profound gratitude for the gift of recovery we have received, we offer this book to sex addicts who are seeking a new way of life.

2. CHANGE IN TRADITION 11 (Paragraph 3, page 94, Second Edition, Second Printing)

Replace the following sentences in the 2nd edition: “In the case of visual media, such as TV or films, we may even choose to have our faces hidden. This policy prevents our identity as SAA members from being publicly revealed. But it also protects the fellowship.”

With the following changes for the third edition: “In the case of visual media, such as TV or films, we have found it best to keep our faces hidden when speaking as members of SAA. This policy prevents our identity as SAA members from being publicly revealed. More importantly, it protects the fellowship from public controversy.”

3. ADD THE FOLLOWING AFTER PAGE 98 (before personal stories):

The Steps Are the Spiritual Solution*

Some of us started out as a “tourist” at SAA meetings—the member who shows up every week or every other week, who shares at meetings, who may even buy and read the literature, but who doesn't get a sponsor, doesn't work the steps, certainly never stays for a business meeting—and who doesn't stop acting out on his or her inner-circle behaviors for more than a few weeks at a time before the next relapse. This resistance to surrendering to the SAA program is rooted in pride and a stubborn unwillingness to admit defeat, despite the pain and consequences already experienced. As an SAA “tourist,” we cling to the belief that we are not really powerless and that just going to meetings (maybe combined with just going to

church, or just seeing a therapist, or just getting a slip signed, or just reading a book) will be enough to turn things around without too much inconvenience. Many tourists drop in and out for months or even years before one final crisis brings us to our bottom and makes us willing, at last, to get serious.

This experience brings into focus the difficult truth that no addict is compelled to work the suggested steps in this program. A member can't be kicked out because he relapsed or because she hasn't moved past Step One. Tradition Three assures us that anyone with a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior, however slight the desire, is welcome in SAA, for as long as it takes for recovery to take hold. That said, our hearts go out in compassion to those suffering sex addicts who still hang back, when the solution to our common addiction is so close and when their brothers and sisters in SAA stand ready to help and guide the way.

In our experience, though meetings are important, they are not sufficient for recovery from sex addiction. We need the spiritual solution offered by the Twelve Steps. To be sure, meetings are where most of us first encounter the steps, learn about the program, find our sponsors, and share with others our desire for recovery. But if we want to actually *experience* recovery in our lives, there are no shortcuts. We have to work the steps to experience the fruits of working the steps.

The steps are the spiritual solution to our addiction—leading not only to a life of abstinence from our addictive sexual behaviors, but to a fulfilling life of service to our brothers and sisters in recovery and beyond. The spiritual awakening described in Step Twelve puts us on the path of service and connects us with our Higher Power, our fellow addicts, and our world in ways we had never dreamed possible. This awakening is the foundation of a responsible and joyful existence as we seek and find our Higher Power's will for us—both in our individual lives and in the life of our fellowship. And for this priceless gift of recovery, so astonishingly simple, so freely available, we are humbly grateful. We invite all suffering sex addicts, inside and outside the rooms of SAA, to join with us in accepting this gift.

**Written for the Third Edition*

4. REMOVE STORY #36 “Nervous Breakthrough” (Page 269, Second Edition, Second Printing)

5. ADD STORY #36 “Being ‘Normal’” in the place of “Nervous Breakthrough”

36.

Being “Normal”

I am a 41-year-old man, and have been a member of Sex Addicts Anonymous for eleven years. I have not acted out since I came to SAA and became willing to go to any lengths to recover. Eleven years ago, I remember talking on the phone with a friend I greatly trusted and respected, the closest thing I had to a mentor. In the past I'd told him about the sexual behaviours I was doing and couldn't seem to stop. He

said to me, firmly like a true friend would, that I should either go to a counsellor or look into a twelve-step group for sex problems. Paranoid about people finding out about my sexual behaviours, I avoided therapy and found SAA on the internet. I ordered lots of SAA literature and tapes from the ISO. We had no Green Book back then, so I read the first few chapters of another twelve-step fellowship's book dealing with addiction to alcohol, translating it into terms of sex addiction in my head. I had a very rude awakening!

Soon after this, I was jogging around a park with my friend and said I was willing to go to any lengths to stop my behaviour. I realised it didn't matter if everyone in my home town thought I was a disgusting pervert to be shunned, I simply had to recover. The progressive nature of sex addiction was something I did not want to experience. My friend helped me do my three circles, after I showed him the leaflet, and it turned out he actually knew someone else who had a problem with acting out, very different than mine. So the two of us formed an SAA group at my house (there were no meetings in our town then). We didn't really know what we were doing. Then we found a venue and rented it weekly. Soon another person came along. We began to listen to the ISO tapes as a form of speaker meeting. We talked about our circles and our acting-out behaviour. I had a sponsor and thought I was practicing the principles of all the Twelve Steps.

I remained sexually sober in the fellowship. The group slowly grew and so did I. But as is often the case with growth, sometimes it can feel like moving backwards. After three years or so, I thought that the best way to put my behaviours behind me was to decide I wasn't a sex addict and to leave SAA! My thinking at the time was that I hadn't acted out for years and that SAA was just keeping me obsessed about my old behaviours. "Out of sight, out of mind," I thought. Also I didn't like the idea of explaining to potential partners where I was going every meeting night.

At first all seemed fine. My friend from years before whom I'd gone jogging with did not seem to disagree with me, though he said I should keep an eye on my thinking and not get too complacent. But then a funny thing started to happen. I realised that deep down I was still deeply attracted to my acting-out inspirations. When I would walk around the town, watch TV, go to the beach, etc., I would be uncomfortably aware of how I felt, and that I was not "cured." I was not a changed man. All I wanted was to be normal—and to feel normal! One day I fell to my knees in my front room while watching TV, begging God to remove this thinking. It didn't go.

Soon I returned to SAA, to see what could be done. I didn't realise it, but something had changed. I now had a sneaking suspicion I really needed SAA, and that I was not capable of living happily without something like it. This sense has grown over the years, and I now realise it has a name: Step One. So I had not been practicing all the Twelve Steps after all. And because I didn't have Step One, how could I have done Step Twelve—helping other sex addicts? How could I have taken

them through the Twelve Steps of SAA? But now, with a better grasp of Step One (and practicing the principles of all the other steps), people started to ask me to help them, to sponsor them. I then took two people through the Twelve Steps and they are still sexually sober, years later! The word “miracle” definitely springs to mind.

As I practiced the steps, the spiritual experience of SAA really started to happen. Now my feelings about SAA, and myself, have changed drastically. I am no longer the insecure person who felt so abnormal. I am now filled with a confidence in the power that SAA and the Twelve Steps give me, a day at a time. I am not tempted to act out. I am no longer obsessed with thoughts of my acting out when walking around the town, or watching TV and so forth. If it does come up, it does not bother me so much. I know I am trying, with as much honesty as possible, to be the best man I can be, given the disease I have. What used to be a shameful dark secret, has now—through sponsoring people—become a tool that I can use to help people recover. I have seen sponsees’ families return to them; I have seen them get married and start families. What a gift to have contributed to that!

By admitting, after a long struggle and many excuses, that I really needed SAA, and that I belonged there, I have been given the opportunity to feel more *normal*. It was only by admitting that I did not fit in with my definition of “normal” that I was able to feel so much more normal, to feel a part of the mainstream of life. For my first few years, SAA meetings sometimes seemed like rooms full of sick people, which I was demeaning myself by taking part in. Now they seem like places where I can truly belong and be myself, but more importantly, give of myself. What I bring to a meeting and to SAA gives me much more than what I hope to take. There is a power and vision in SAA so much greater than I could ever be—it is my hope for the future. I pray, meditate, take inventory, do service and outreach. I am sponsored and I am a sponsor. I am part of a home group, and I speak at meetings. And I do all this not because I should, but because I want the life these actions give me, because of the person they make me.
