

THE OUTER CIRCLE

An Open Book

**This special issue explores changes to the
Third Edition of the Green Book — and why those
changes were made**

PLUS

Welcoming Women

Working with a Therapist

Matching Gift Challenge





International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

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The Outer Circle Mission

The mission of *The Outer Circle* is to provide information from the ISO and to share the experience, strength, and hope members have obtained from working the SAA program of recovery. 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 *TOC*, SAA members contribute 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 are encouraged to reproduce *TOC* at no charge and display it alongside other SAA literature. To keep costs down, please print out the online version.

If you have comments or suggestions, please see contact information on p. 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.

September - October 2015

CONTENTS

Columns

- 4 From the Editor
- 5 From the Director
- 12 Dear Grace
- 14 Dear Will
- 16 Living in Sobriety

Departments

- 2 TOC Mission
- 6 Letters
- 8 ISO News
- 26 ISO Announcements
- 28 Contact the ISO
- 29 Calendar
- 30 Submission Guidelines
- 31 Twelve Steps

Articles



18 An Open Book

Examining the changes to the Third Edition of the Green Book — and why they were made



21 Being 'Normal'

Working the Steps allowed this addict to lose the obsession and reclaim his life.



24 The Spiritual Solution

Why meetings aren't enough to recover from sex addiction.

FROM THE EDITOR

Seeking Approval

BY GARY T.

Our core recovery text has yet to receive the highest level of fellowship approval: Conference approval.

This may be one of the most important issues of *The Outer Circle*. That's because it's dedicated to the Third Edition of *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, which many of us affectionately call the Green Book.

Most SAAers don't realize it, but our core recovery text — from which many study our steps, traditions, and stories — has yet to receive the highest level of approval from our fellowship: Conference Approval.

Since its first printing in 2005, the Green Book has been Literature Committee approved, the first step in becoming Conference approved. During that time, Literature Committee (of which I'm a part) has gathered feedback from the fellowship — through surveys and work groups — about how the Green Book should be changed. All of those changes were compiled into the Third Edition, and they are detailed in a special section that starts on page 18.

The decision to publish articles already printed in *Sex Addicts Anonymous* represents a concerted effort to set the record straight about the Green Book so that our fellowship can finally come together around our core piece of recovery literature. In so doing, the Literature Committee plans to bring the Green Book forward for Conference Approval in 2016.

Please, share this issue with fellows, and encourage them to download it at saa-recovery.org/newsletter.

Is the Green Book perfect? Certainly not. But the Third Edition represents a concerted effort to address concerns of the fellowship. And it's time for all of us to rally around it to ensure newcomers are not left wondering about the unity of our fellowship — and our shared belief that working the Twelve Steps of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* leads to a spiritual awakening that allows anyone to be free from sex addiction.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Help Make the Matching Gift Challenge a Success

BY JOE H.

The timing of this gift could not be better to support major initiatives to better serve newcomers looking for help.

If you want to help SAA carry the message to more suffering addicts, now is the time. I would like to announce an unprecedented fundraising opportunity. A member of our program contacted the ISO recently to explore a matching gift program. He was clear that he didn't want to detract from existing contributions and wanted to structure the gift to result in new, additional contributions.

"The hope is that my gift encourages and stimulates additional giving from those who have the capacity to give." We agreed to call the initial campaign the "\$30,000 Matching Gift Challenge." I say initial because our donor is willing to consider another matching gift in 2017 if this one goes well.

It runs September 1, 2015, through December 25, 2016. Only new or increased LifeLine Partner enrollments will qualify for matching funds since they honor the donor's wish not to detract from current contributions and fundraising events. LifeLines also make it easy to measure new or increased donations.

The timing of this gift could not be better to support major initiatives in progress to upgrade the ISO's technology infrastructure, translate our literature to help establish the program in foreign countries, and implement a redesigned outreach website which will better serve newcomers looking for help.

How can you help SAA meet the match? First, continue any current donations, as our donor requests. Secondly, enroll as a new LifeLine Partner or, for current LifeLine Partners, increase your monthly donation amount. You can enroll or increase online at saa-recovery.org/LifeLinePartner/, or by calling the ISO office at 800-477-8191.

For the details of the match, please see p. 10.

LETTERS

Woman Shares Healing Experience from All Men's Meeting

I am writing to share an experience that I had that may be of value to others in the SAA program.

One Thursday night, a woman attended our "Ask-it-Basket" meeting. It was her first meeting. She was the only female in the group of eight men plus her. As it happens, she was probably looking for a COSA meeting. However, without any hesitation, we in the group respectfully welcomed her. I chaired the meeting as though it was our regular meeting. We followed the SAA format, opened with the serenity prayer, read the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Someone picked out a topic from the basket and we all proceeded to share openly and honestly, without holding back or compromising our shares. As it turned out, she was the last to share. It was a difficult and emotional experience for her, yet she shared some of her story with us from her heart.

The follow week, she dropped by to give me this note, which I want to share. This is what recovery and spirituality in action is all about to me. This was a blessing to those of us who were fortunate enough to have been at the meeting.

Her note is as follows:

To the men at last Thursday's meeting... THANK YOU!

It was my first meeting, and I was nervous. I was upset. I was hurt. I was sad. And you shared, and were honest, and open, and truthful. You offered me emotional support. You offered tips I can use in my toolkit. You offered me ideas for when I get stuck. And you gave me a gift of your encouragement.

Please believe me when I say that I heard your words. Though I've heard these words said, I absorbed them in a way I haven't before. I heard you. And although those words made me cry, my heart feels lighter for the healing tears.

I thank you all for opening your meeting to me, for choosing to attend the meeting, for sharing, and for your support. It made a difference in my recovery.

Thank you,

A recovering ex-spouse.

Anonymous

Quick Take: Pearls of Recovery Wisdom Heard Lately, Part 1

Editor's note: Quick Take invites short responses of around 100 words on an issue of recovery. Next issue's quick take: Part 2 of What pearls of recovery wisdom have you heard lately that are helping to keep you sober? If you have ideas for Quick Takes, please send them to toc@saa-recovery.org.

Gratitude is Key to Recovery

I was reminded recently about the power of actively practicing gratitude every day. Recently, during a period of depression, I became lax in my practice of gratitude and suddenly realized that I was experiencing unresolved resentments, and I was getting fearful about things that were clearly out of my control. Although I remained sober, I was not really working my program of recovery.

For me, gratitude has been an effective antidote against anger, resentment, fear, and other self-centered emotions. I cannot be angry, resentful, fearful, or absorbed in self-pity and be grateful at the same time.

Jim L.

Using the Program as a Problem Solver

My sponsor has a simple solution to any problem: how could I work my program around it? It amazes me how many times I have tried everything but the program.

You see, I tend to think that there are problems that are special. They fall outside of the domain of the program. This belief keeps me from using the wonderful tools this program has to offer. It implies that the program is limited in scope (while my problems are not).

Les J.

Letters to the editor are welcome. Please send your feedback to toc@saa-recovery.org. Letters may be edited for space and content.

ISO NEWS

Board Establishes SAA Twelve Concepts of World Service Workgroup

In the months of May through July, the ISO Board of Directors approved creation of a workgroup to explore creating SAA's own Twelve Concepts of World Service and a \$10,000 stipend for the Executive Director to hire contractors. Here's a look at all the Board's actions:

May

- » Approved that the ISO board allow the North Central Region to Caucus on Monday, July 20, 2015, for the purposes of electing a Conference Steering Committee representative, a CSC alternate, a LitCom alternate, and other business that may arise.
- » Approved establishing an exploratory workgroup to explore the possibility of creating a workgroup (consisting of the Executive Director, two Board members, two LitCom members, and two CSC members) to explore the possibility of creating SAA's own Twelve Concepts of World Service.

June

- » Approved that a quorum of the ISO Board of Trustees be defined as three-fifths of the eligible voting members as determined at the beginning of the service year, with an adjustment during the service year if there are resignations or additions.
- » Approved that the ISO Delegate Conference be held annually in Houston, TX, on the third weekend in October, commencing with October 19 through 20, 2018.

July

- » Approved funding for Board Trustees and Board Alternates to attend a face-to-face meeting in Houston, beginning October 16th and ending October 18th.
- » Approved \$10,000 to be used at the discretion of the executive director for hiring of SAA members on a contractor basis. These funds will be available for use from August 1, 2015, to December 31, 2015.

Large Intergroup Donations Lead to July Financial Surplus

In the month of July, we had a surplus of \$6,100.52. We had budgeted for a deficit of \$4,554.60. We exceeded our budget estimate by \$10,655.12. This surplus was due mainly to several large donations from intergroups, increases in the number of groups giving donations, and a final check from the DC intergroup in support of the 2015 convention.

Our gross sales revenue for the SAA Green Book exceeded our estimate by \$109.67 in July and has exceeded our estimate by \$6,481.06 for the year.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales were below our estimate by \$1,337.97 for July and are below our estimate by \$1,764.44 for the year. Our bronze medallion sales exceeded our estimate by \$665 in July and has exceeded our estimate by \$2,741.94 for the year.

Our total sales for July were below our estimate by \$314.78.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$2,316.11 for July and has exceeded our estimate by \$20,052.29 for the year. Group donations exceeded our estimate by \$8,025.30 in July and has exceeded our estimate by \$22,769.25 for the year.

Our product inventory is valued at \$59,026.02.

Our expenses exceeded our estimate by \$1,545.90 in July.

Summary of the annual budget (January 1, 2015, to July 30, 2015):

- » Gross sales have exceeded our estimate by \$9,276.74.
- » Donations have exceeded our estimate by \$42,821.54.
- » Expenses are over our estimate by \$6,311.08.

Our operational reserve is fully funded.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,

Joe H.

Executive Director

ISO NEWS

ISO Announces the \$30,000 Matching Gift Challenge

Please Help SAA Meet the Challenge!

If you have ever considered enrolling as a LifeLine Partner, now would be the time! Why? An anonymous member of SAA has pledged to match donations to the ISO up to \$30,000.

Our donor wants:

- » To use his gift to encourage new, additional contributions.
- » To avoid detracting from current contributions and fundraisers.
- » The matching gift to go into the ISO general fund.

Details about the match:

- » Starts September 1, 2015; ends December 25, 2016.
- » Only new or increased Monthly LifeLine Partner enrollments will qualify for the match
- » New LifeLines: the first monthly contribution will qualify for a match equal to the amount of the first year's total donation; 12 monthly contributions.
- » Example: A new LifeLine of \$20 per month. The first donation of \$20 will immediately qualify for a match of \$240. $\$20 \times 12 \text{ (1yr)} = \240
- » Increased LifeLines: will be matched in the same manner as new LLs, except only the increased amount will be matched.
- » Example: A \$20 LifeLine is increased to \$30 per month. The increased amount of \$10 will immediately qualify for a match of \$120. $\$10 \times 12 \text{ (1yr)} = \120
- » Donations will be used to support outreach and all of the activities and services provided by the ISO.

How to Participate:

Enroll as a new LifeLine Partner or increase your current LifeLine. You can enroll or increase online or by telephone. Online at: saa-recovery.org/Life-LinePartner/. Telephone: 800-477-8191.

Understanding, Participating in the Conference Steering Committee

The main purpose of the Conference Steering Committee (CSC) is to write motions for the Conference to approve or reject. Most of these motions deal with the way the Conference is set up, and how it functions.

Most CSC work is done in subcommittees, which then submit their suggestions to the rest of the CSC. Any SAA member may attend CSC meeting, or CSC subcommittee meetings, and may work with us on our projects. Any current group delegate may vote in the subcommittee meetings; only elected CSC members may vote in the Conference Steering Committee meetings.

Here are the current CSC subcommittees, along with their meeting times:

Charter and Bylaws subcommittee works on bringing our foundational documents and our policies into full agreement, and meets the first Sunday of each month at 2:00 p.m. Central Time.

Area Formation subcommittee works on the implementation of the bylaws amendment that calls for Conference delegates to come from areas, rather than from groups, and meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 p.m. Central Time.

Policy and Procedure subcommittee works on both Conference and CSC rules and structure, and meets the third Sunday of each month, at 2:00 p.m. Central Time.

Nominating subcommittee works on implementation of the Bylaws amendment that calls for Board members, LitCom members, and CSC members to be elected at large, rather than by regions, and meets on the third Sunday of each month at 3:00 p.m. Central Time.

The full Conference Steering Committee meets on the fourth Sunday of each month at 2:00 p.m. Central Time.

Please contact the ISO office for information on how to attend, or contact the CSC directly at csc.feedback@saa-iso.org.

Tom N.

CSC Chair

DEAR GRACE

Welcoming Women into Mixed Meetings

BY WOMEN'S
OUTREACH
SUBCOMMITTEE

To honor the traditions of Sex Addicts Anonymous, we simply cannot turn away from our primary purpose: To carry our message to the still suffering sex addict.

Dear Grace:

I am a man in recovery attending a mixed meeting in my town, but we rarely have women. My wife has told me she does not want me attending meetings if women are present, and several of us in the meeting are in this situation.

Recently, a woman showed up to our meeting. We didn't know what to do. One of the other men in the group told her that some of our wives aren't comfortable with women attending our meetings. I don't know if she will come back. I hope she can find something that works for her, but her attending the meeting doesn't work for me. What do I do?

Sincerely,

Doesn't Work for Me

Dear Doesn't Work for Me:

This experience is not unusual; however, our Fellowship is a place for all suffering sex addicts. Often times, it is human nature to separate ourselves based upon our differences. But when it comes to addiction, the pain we experience is universal. Very few of us have walked into the rooms of SAA without feeling this pain. The newcomer, male or female, holds a special place in our meeting for this reason.

The most important step to take is to welcome the newcomer (woman) to the mixed meeting, regardless of how uncomfortable you feel. It is vital, if the meeting is listed as a mixed meeting, that everyone there treat it as such, which means that women are welcome. Period. To honor the traditions of Sex Addicts Anonymous, we simply cannot turn away from our primary purpose: to carry our message to the still-suffering sex addict. We cannot tell a wom-



an she is not welcome when our meeting clearly states that she is and she has the desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.

We are each responsible for our own recovery. Some may be so uncomfortable that they choose to leave the meeting for that session. If there are some in the group who are not able or willing to welcome women, perhaps they could start a separate meeting for men only. Please, make sure it's listed properly as a "men-only meeting"!

However, in line with Tradition One, we have found that our recovery is enhanced and our groups and fellowship grow stronger when we recover together, men and women. Quite often, we or our spouses may fear contact with the opposite gender. This is natural because this was often the object of our acting out. However, experience has shown that, when we come together and really hear each other's stories, we find we are in fact the same, sharing the same disease and the same solution.

SAA provides resources addressing how to welcome women to meetings, such as "A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer" and "Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings — Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting" pamphlets and the Group Guide, which gives guidelines for a group conscience and taking a group inventory. There are also audio recordings addressing the subject on the SAA website.

Thank you for writing,

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

How to Work with a Therapist

BY WILL

**The Green Book
offers guidance
on working
with a therapist
and actually
encourages us to
seek outside help.**

Dear Will,

I sometimes hear people share in a meeting about something they discussed with their therapist. I'm not working with a therapist, and haven't up to this point felt the need to. However, hearing people talk about their therapists makes me wonder. Do you think it would help me with my recovery if I started working with one?

On My Own

Dear OMO,

Will wants to begin by first asking you a question himself. Given that you describe yourself as being "on your own" causes him to wonder if you have a sponsor. Once you have a sponsor, the question of getting a therapist would be a great one to bring up. You will have the opportunity to discuss with your sponsor why you find a therapist necessary. But a therapist is not a substitute for a sponsor.

Will worked with a therapist on one occasion. Later, he realized the reason he decided to do so was that he was dealing with a personal relationship issue he had already brought up to his sponsor and others in the program. Because he didn't like the answer he kept getting, he was hoping a more "liberal-minded" therapist would give him an answer he liked better.

Actually, the therapist gave him the same answer, but Will thought he would have a better chance of changing the therapist's mind. As it turned out, both his SAA friends and sponsor and his therapist were correct. Will could have saved himself some years of grief and trouble if he had listened to them.

If you do decide to work with a therapist, Will believes that you would do well to inquire up front as to



his or her familiarity and agreement with Twelve-Step programs. Otherwise, you run the risk of having a therapist whose basic philosophy runs counter to that of the Twelve Steps.

Sex Addicts Anonymous also offers guidance on working with a therapist and actually encourages us to seek outside help “to further our well-being and personal growth.”

The “Outside Help” section on page 74 goes on to say: “Many of us have sought therapy in order to help ourselves heal from deep-seated emotional and psychological wounds, including sexual abuse and trauma.

We may have suffered grave losses associated with our addictive behaviors or past abuse, and our grief over these losses may

seem overwhelming. Or we may find that we need professional support in coping with the effects of sexual trauma. We are free to seek whatever professional help we need in order to aid our grieving and healing process.”

To conclude, although Will has never found a therapist to be necessary to his own recovery, others have found therapy to be an important part of recovery. However, Will would encourage you to run by your sponsor any recovery-related suggestions your therapist makes.

Will

*If you have a question for Will,
please send an email to [men4saa@
saa-recovery.org](mailto:men4saa@saa-recovery.org).*

LIVING IN SOBRIETY

Using Program Work — and the Outer Circle to Stay Sober

BY LES J.

With 10 years of sobriety, this SAA member says a combination of service and activities in and outside SAA helps keep him sober.

My addiction history has two parts. In the early era, I engaged in behaviors that progressed in severity to the point where I got into trouble and was forced to get counseling as a condition of my probation.

These behaviors included masturbating discreetly in public areas, voyeurism, and exhibitionism. Counseling became therapy, which continued about 34 years to this day. (I may be terminating therapy soon.) With the counseling, I stopped most behaviors save one that took about a year. I began participating in a succession of Twelve Step programs.

“Part Two” of my recovery roughly coincides with walking into the rooms of SAA. My inner circle includes masturbation and therapeutic massage with female practitioners. The culprit here is fantasy. The behaviors of masturbation and therapeutic massage are not bad in themselves. Other sober addicts might engage in those without ill effects. But for me, masturbation contributes to a fantasy that leaves me feeling frustrated and depressed.

The massage activity in particular would have me wondering who I would get as a practitioner. Would I get sexually aroused? The fact that it was a therapeutic setting made it all the more enticing to me. I knew that I faced disapproval of the masseuse. Without fail, I would feel very disappointed if I did not receive what I regarded as a high-quality massage. I have had thoughts relating to suicide so I need to take the depression seriously.

I haven't acted out since entering the SAA program. I use a combination of tools and practices. Again, therapy has been an important part of my recovery. I have focused on my sexual addiction in all its manifestations. That includes feeling attracted to children. I have worked the Steps with a sponsor at

least twice through. I have gone at a slow but thorough pace. I think what SAA has done for me was provide accountability. Denial is easy to see in others but difficult to see in myself. It is, of course, a “we” program. Isolation and lack of social skills are problems that I have whittled away at.

I attend two meetings a week and share in at least one of them. I work on committees, both locally and internationally, to perform service.

On the one hand, this has its drawbacks. It can be a challenge to see eye to eye with others. Compromise is important. But on the other hand, I can do things that I can't in the “real world.” I can take on responsibilities that are new for me. I can develop skills, both social and technical, that I can use elsewhere in my life.

Things I avoid are activities involving physical contact with children, body-parting or ogling strangers, spending many hours in one day on the computer or otherwise isolating, and engaging in sexual fantasy, especially while trying to get to sleep.

The solution is my outer circle. Besides program work, it has a number of social activities in it. I am doing meditation and working the Tenth Step, both on a regular basis.

I have yet to engage in much prayer. I grew up acting very independently. My

family was lacking in support. Although I was polite, I still had a large ego. My concept of Higher Power is not well defined. Still, the main thing to know is that my Higher Power is a lot bigger than I am. Humility doesn't come easy. And it is really hard to ask for help.

I am just starting to use the phone to give and receive support. I know it takes time to build relationships. It is risky to be vulnerable. Social activities are regular participation in dance communities, and occasional discussion groups.

There are challenges here, too. I see people do things on the dance floor that are out of bounds for me as an addict. I feel envious and critical at the same time. If it gets to be simply too much emotional stress for me, I can and do choose another community.

I engage in sober online dating, which can seem to be somewhat of an exercise in futility, but I think it is one more option for putting myself out there. I am not currently in a relationship, but I have a lot of other things going for me. Relationship, as well as sexuality, will hopefully be added to my already full life.

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.



An Open Book

Examining the changes to the third edition of the Green Book — and why they were made

Several editions of *Sex Addicts Anonymous* are currently in print. But none are officially Conference approved. In 2007, the Second Edition 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, though it remained in print.

The ISO Literature Committee spent the next five years gathering feedback through surveys and work groups comprised of the Literature Committee and concerned members of the fellowship.

LitCom approved four key changes in May, 2012, and printed the Third Edition of *Sex Addicts Anonymous*. It has been under the process of review and feedback since and remains in print. LitCom intends to bring a motion to the 2016 Conference for approval of the Third Edition.

This issue of *The Outer Circle* is devoted to detailing the changes made to the Third Edition — and how they addressed fellowship concerns.

Change 1: 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 include 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 who share 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

Summary of Changes to the Third Edition of Sex Addicts Anonymous

- 1. Foreword to the Third Edition – clarifies the purpose and scope of the book. (p. 19)*
- 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. (p. 20)*
- 3. Deletion of an old story – deleted due to an emphasis on the addiction rather than the solution. Addition of a new story – a story that was found to be very based and grounded in working the Twelve Steps. (p. 21-23)*
- 4. “The Steps Are the Spiritual Solution” added after the first 98 pages – an inspired piece written to clarify that our program is based on the Twelve Steps and is spiritual in nature. (p. 24-25)*

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.

Change 2: Tradition Eleven (Paragraph 3, page 94, Second Edition, Second Printing)

The Second Edition currently says: "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."

That sentence gets replaced in the Third Edition with: "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."

Voices of Recovery

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

—Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 95

When I am willing to break away from all the items I identify as a part of myself — my job or profession, my wardrobe, the car I drive, my status in the community, my need to be right — I can stand in solitude with my Higher Power in absolute surrender. In this state, I experience an honesty that is pure.

To be a worker among workers or to have compassion for my fellow suffering addicts brings a feeling of connectedness and completeness. One anonymous being united with others. The fulfillment that I crave is satisfied with this surrender. I experience a new sense of what is important and find my heart filled with gratitude.

Today, I can let go of ego-based validations and experience the unity of the fellowship, if I am willing to let go.

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, and how to submit a meditation, see page 26.



~~INSANITY~~

Being ‘Normal’

Working the steps allowed this addict to lose the obsession — and reclaim his life

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 behaviors 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 counselor or look into a Twelve-Step group for sex problems. Paranoid

Change 3: Deletion of an old story – deleted due to an emphasis on the addiction rather than the solution. Addition of a new story – a story that was found to be very based and grounded in working the Twelve Steps. Deleted story is no. 34 “Nervous Breakthrough” on page 269, second edition, second printing.

about people finding out about my sexual behaviors, 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!

I realized it didn't matter if everyone in my hometown 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.

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 behavior. I realized it didn't matter if everyone in my hometown 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 behavior. 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 behaviors 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 behaviors. "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 realized 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 realize 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 realize 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.



The Steps Are The Spiritual Solution

Why meetings aren't enough to recover from sex addiction

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

Change 4: “The Steps Are the Spiritual Solution” added after the first 98 pages – an inspired piece written to clarify that our program is based on the Twelve Steps and is spiritual in nature.

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.

When The Fog Lifts

By Paul P.

When the fog lifts
Imagining a new life
No more questioning
A lot less strife.

A horizon with muted
colors
Can't see clearly
Decisions more sound
Embracing change dearly.

Reason gives way to doubt,
No longer wonder,
Logic and good sense
pervade,
Avoiding unnecessary
blunder.

When the fog lifts,
Better feeling arrives
Like the sun coming out,
Watch as creativity thrives.

No longer fearing out-
comes,
Handling the ups and
downs
One day at a time
More smiles less frowns.

A better place to be
More secure, success bound
Practice it daily,
Peace and serenity found.

ISO ANNOUNCEMENTS

Compulsive Sexual Anorexia Outreach Group Works on New Guide

The Compulsive Sexual (Anorexia) Outreach Committee is working on an Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance First Step Guide draft to submit to the Literature Committee. We continue to look for ways to reach out to members of the SAA fellowship who want to explore intimacy and sexual avoidance recovery. To see when the CSAOC meets, go to p. 29.

SAA Pamphlets Now Available to Read Online

The ISO is pleased to announce the availability of SAA pamphlets on the SAA website (saa-recovery.org). The pamphlets may be found by following the “SAA Literature” sub-tab from the home page. Also included are the pamphlets in Spanish and the “Pathway to Recovery” pamphlet in French.

This milestone has been accomplished by the combined efforts of the ISO Literature Committee, the ISO office, and the ISO Board of Trustees and its committees, specifically the Online Presence Committee and the International Development Committee. We believe that ready access to SAA literature online will greatly enhance the capacity of member groups and individual members of the fellowship to carry the SAA message of recovery more effectively and more efficiently.

As before, the printed pamphlets are available for purchase from the ISO — either through the online SAA Store or by telephone or postal mail from the ISO office. Don't forget to ask about our volume discount.

Submissions Sought for SAA Meditation Book

The ISO Literature Committee welcomes submission of entries from the fellowship-at-large for possible inclusion in the SAA Meditation Book. The Meditation Book will consist of 366 entries, one for each day of the calendar year.

To ensure consideration, submissions should contain the following:

- » A short quotation taken from SAA publications that are Literature Committee approved or Conference approved (see list below). The quote must include the source and page number using the following style: Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 20. Quotes from other sources will not be considered.
- » The main body is an expansion of the topic or principle, ideally including perspective on a particular aspect of SAA recovery through your experience, your strength,

ISO ANNOUNCEMENTS

your hope, and your voice. Please note that we have found that using “I” rather than “we” in the body of the meditation makes for a stronger message. This is the critical component of your submission. We can add a quote or an affirmation, but only you can provide your ES&H.



- » At the bottom of the page, a concise statement to summarize the main idea of the meditation, or offer a poignant challenge or affirmation.

Each entry should be 200-350 words including the quotation and the closing affirmation (1.5 - 3 sides, handwritten). Submissions must include your name and contact information to be cross-referenced with your release form.

Sources for Opening Quotation

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

Release Form: The ISO must have a signed release before a submission can be considered. 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.

Please send a digital copy of your submission (attached as .doc, .docx, .rtf, .txt, or in the body of the email) to: meditation@saa-recovery.org.

Include complete contact information and, if possible, a signed scanned release. All submitters must send or have sent a release form - one per author - before submissions can be considered.

You can also send your meditation, contact information, and signed release by postal mail to: Meditation Book, ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

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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:

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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.

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CALENDAR

Here are tentative ISO outreach and committee meeting times for the next several months. Meetings times change often. All times are Central Standard Time.

First Sunday of the month:

Audio Review Committee (even months only) — 2:30 p.m.

LGBT Outreach — 1:00 p.m.

Conference Steering Committee - Area Formation — 1:00 p.m.

Second Saturday of the month

Author's Group — 4:30 p.m.

Women's Outreach — 5:00 p.m.

Compulsive Sexual (Anorexia) Outreach — 8 a.m.

Second Sunday of the month

General Outreach — 6:30 p.m.

Literature Committee — 4:00 p.m.

CSC - Nominating Committee — 4:00 p.m.

Third Tuesday of the month

Prisoner Outreach — 8:00 p.m.

Third Thursday of the month

Seventh Tradition — 6:00 p.m.

2016 Convention — 7:00 p.m.

Third Saturday of the month

Inter-fellowship Relations — 3:00 p.m.

Information Systems and Online Presence Committee — 2:00 p.m.

CSC - Policy & Procedure — 1 p.m.

Third Sunday of the month

SE Region — 6:00 p.m.

Fourth Sunday of the month

CSC — 2:00 p.m.

Meditation Writing Workshop — 5:00 p.m.

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 or call the ISO office.

Here's a listing of upcoming SAA events from around the fellowship.

September

The Women's Retreat Workgroup is hosting the 4th International Women's Retreat **Sept. 18-20** near Seattle. This is a closed event, for women SAA members 18 years old and older only. Advanced registration is required. GraceOnTheSound@gmail.com.

October

The Birmingham Area Intergroup's Ninth Annual Fall Retreat is **Oct. 23-25** at Sumatanga Camp and Conference Center in Gallant, AL. Other S-fellowships, and spouses are welcome. info@saa-bham.org, or call Jim L, 205-408-2500 or text/call 205-240-6599.

If you'd like your event to be listed in the Calendar section, please send it to toc@saa-recovery.org. To ensure your listing gets published in time, please send it at least two months in advance of the event.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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 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.

Deadlines for Submission

| | |
|-----------|--------|
| Jan/Feb: | Nov 5 |
| Mar/Apr: | Jan 5 |
| May/June: | Mar 5 |
| July/Aug: | May 5 |
| Sept/Oct: | July 5 |
| Nov/Dec: | Sept 5 |

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.

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: _____

SAA TWELVE STEPS

- 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.

