

# The Outer Circle

The Newsletter of the  
International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

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## The following actions were approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2014

- Approved a SC Region mid-year caucus on Aug 16th at the 14th annual SAA Retreat "A River of Recovery" Retreat at TECABOCA Retreat Center in Kerrville, TX.

## The following actions were approved by the Board of Trustees in July 2014

- There were no approved actions in July.

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## LGBT Outreach Subcommittee News

Since our meeting in L.A., we have met by teleconference in July and August. In July, a decision to continue to work on service projects and the development of another was made. In August, we approved the one page flier project. Please see the following for further details and information on what we are working on this year. The more participation we have in our projects can only be a boon for our Outreach efforts to the LGBT sex addict. Please see fit to join us in our efforts. We do not want to be sunsetted by the Board, do we?

2014-15 Service Projects that are currently being worked on include:

Projects that have been continued from the 2013-14 Service Year:

- 1) Monitoring and responding to email inquiries: Inquiries received are mostly for general information, looking for local meetings or seeking sponsors which are shared with volunteers. In this vain, we have also received inquiries concerning transgender issues. Currently we have no volunteers in this area. If you are willing to respond to transgender issues, please contact us through our email address listed below;
- 2) Updating the LGBT friendly meeting list: We continue the process of updating this list, which is used when we get an inquiry concerning LGBT or LGBT friendly meetings. If you know of one please contact us via email;
- 3) Working with the Information System and Online Presence Committee (ISOPcom) to develop information to be placed on the ISO website: The information that was sent is under review by the committee;

- 4) Member suggestions on PSA's in local or regional publications: Please send any of your suggestions to our email address listed below or better yet, attend and participate in the Subcommittee's monthly teleconference;
- 5) A one-page flier which can be mailed or emailed to outside professionals, containing relevant quotes from the LGBT pamphlet and the link to website version: The flier has been developed and has been sent to LitCom with the request/recommendation that it be placed in the P.I. Manual currently being reviewed/updated. It is hoped that Groups and Intergroups could include it in their Outreach mailings;
- 6) To make the LGBT Outreach Subcommittee more visible to the fellowship between now and the 2015 Conference: This is a new project for this year. We seek ideas and suggestions on this project. Currently, we would like to see a workshop or workshops around LGBT issues at the Conference.

For more information or to volunteer for any of the current LGBT Outreach activities, email us at [GLBT@saa-recovery.org](mailto:GLBT@saa-recovery.org) or attend our monthly teleconference, which is the first Sunday of each month. Contact the ISO Office for call in information.

## New Meditation Booklet Now Available!

We are very excited to announce that our latest addition to SAA literature — "***Voices of Recovery: Meditations on Steps and Traditions***" — is now available at our SAA webstore (<http://saa-store.org/>), on the booklet page (<https://saa-store.org/booklet/>).

This new booklet contains 52 meditations on the Steps and Traditions, written by fellow SAA members. We need your feedback and more meditation submissions as we continue moving towards our goal of producing a larger 366-meditation book.

We wish to thank everyone who has put so much hard work into producing this new addition to our SAA Literature!

NOTE: The Meditation Book subcommittee of the Literature Committee provides monthly meditation writing tele-workshops for those who are interested in creating and submitting their own meditations for publication.

Please come and participate! Dates of future tele-workshops can be found on page 5 of this newsletter.

## ISO Literature Committee Guidelines for submission of entries to be considered for the *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 follow these guidelines:

A short quotation should be taken from SAA publications that are Literature Committee approved or Conference approved (see list at the bottom of the page). 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. What we are looking for is your experience, your strength, 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 meditation 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. 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

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

## Meditation Book Vision Statement

*(approved by the Literature Committee)*

**“The SAA meditation book carries the message of recovery by collecting into one volume diverse voices of the SAA Fellowship to serve as a resource for meditation and prayer for the addict in recovery and the sex addict who still suffers.”**

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### **Send your meditation, contact information, and signed release form to the ISO.**

*(release form is located on the last page of this newsletter)*

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

Include complete contact information and, if possible, a signed scanned release. All submitters must send 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: ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

***If at all possible, please send your submission in digital form. We will, of course, consider all submissions.*** You will be sent a confirmation that your submission has been received.

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## Meditation Writing Tele-Workshops

All those interested in contributing to the meditation book are invited to attend one or more tele-workshops. We will go over the guidelines and process for submission; there will be ample time for writing, and time for sharing as well. Please consider joining us for this unique service opportunity!

All workshops are the **4th Sunday of each month**, at 5:00 p.m. central time, and last until 6:30 p.m.

September 28, 2014

October 26, 2014

November 23, 2014

December 28, 2014

January 25, 2015

February 22, 2015

To register, call the ISO at 1-800-477-8191,  
or send an e-mail to:

[meditation@saa-recovery.org](mailto:meditation@saa-recovery.org)

## Personal Story Submissions for *Sex Addicts Anonymous*:

### Do you have a personal story to tell?

The ISO Literature Committee continues to accept personal stories for consideration for future editions of the SAA book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

### Guidelines for Submission of a Personal Story

Stories in the SAA book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, are an intensely personal way to help carry the SAA message to the addict who still suffers. While there are no absolute requirements for the content of a personal story, the Literature Committee recommends that a story describe:

- What it was like before entering SAA;
- What happened to bring you into SAA;
- What happened within SAA;
- What it is like now with the ongoing experience of SAA recovery.

It is recommended that a story emphasize the experience, strength, and hope found in SAA recovery. It is further recommended that the writer disclose his or her length of sobriety (or abstinence from addictive behaviors).

Personal stories are intended to help carry the message to the addict who still suffers. As much as possible, highly explicit descriptions of places, people, or acting out behaviors should be avoided. The best stories provide sobering details of unmanageability contrasted with the hope of recovery from sex addiction.

The preferred format for manuscripts is double-spaced with one-inch margins on all four sides in MS Word (or similar). Each submission must be accompanied by a signed release conveying ownership to the ISO of SAA, Inc. The release form is available on the last page of this newsletter or from the ISO office or SAA website ([www.saa-recovery.org](http://www.saa-recovery.org)).

Submissions and a signed release form may be e-mailed as attachments to the ISO Literature Committee at [info@saa-recovery.org](mailto:info@saa-recovery.org).

They may also be sent in hard copy by postal mail to the ISO Literature Committee at ISO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

## IMPORTANT

### Please carefully read the following before submitting a personal story for *Sex Addicts Anonymous*:

Every story submitted for possible inclusion in the SAA book will be thoroughly reviewed and given in-depth consideration by the ISO Literature Committee, which is deeply grateful to every member who takes the time to write and submit a story.

The ISO of SAA, Inc. and the ISO Literature Committee do not guarantee that any particular story will appear in a future edition of the SAA book. Once submitted with a signed release form (located on the last page of this newsletter), the written story becomes the permanent property of the ISO of SAA, Inc., and may be edited or modified as deemed appropriate by the ISO Literature Committee.

Please also note that, while the ISO Literature Committee will acknowledge the initial receipt of a story, the ISO may or may not communicate further with the author about the suitability of the story or the likelihood of publication in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

### ***“Getting a Sponsor”***

is now available online at the ISO website store:

**[www.saa-store.org](http://www.saa-store.org)**

This pamphlet addresses many questions SAA members may have about sponsorship, including the importance of having a sponsor, how to find one, what to expect from a sponsor, and much more.

Thank you so much to all who put so much hard work into producing and approving this important new addition to our SAA Literature.

## ISO Income/Expense Summary as of July 31, 2014

	Jul 14	Monthly Avg	Jan - Jul 14
<b>Income</b>			
<b>Sales</b>	21,294.91	20,284.54	141,991.78
<b>Shipping &amp; Handling</b>	2,234.66	2,134.11	14,938.77
<b>Donations</b>	27,196.96	27,761.90	194,333.27
<b>Investment Income</b>	24.24	740.78	5,185.49
<b>Other Income</b>	268.08	41.39	289.73
<b>Convention Income</b>	0.00	10,277.44	71,942.06
<b>Delegate Meeting Income</b>	0.00	1,118.57	7,830.00
<b>Total Income</b>	51,018.85	62,358.73	436,511.10
<b>Cost Of Goods Sold</b>	7,515.25	7,204.18	50,429.29
<b>Gross Profit</b>	43,503.60	55,154.54	386,081.81
<b>Expense</b>			
<b>Wages &amp; Benefits</b>	24,840.61	24,642.34	172,496.39
<b>Payroll Taxes</b>	1,787.54	2,120.56	14,843.93
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	19.18	19.41	135.88
<b>Insurance</b>	3,555.00	614.71	4,303.00
<b>Office Expenses</b>	757.65	940.30	6,582.10
<b>Occupancy Expenses</b>	1,219.30	1,599.38	11,195.64
<b>Communications</b>	448.95	577.13	4,039.88
<b>Travel-Related Expenses</b>	0.00	5,535.41	38,747.90
<b>Professional Fees</b>	0.00	215.43	1,508.00
<b>Board/Committee Expenses</b>	1,392.11	1,827.20	12,790.40
<b>The Outer Circle</b>	1,627.36	1,025.42	7,177.93
<b>Financial Charges</b>	1,402.75	1,633.05	11,431.32
<b>Depreciation</b>	175.00	175.00	1,225.00
<b>Bad Debts/Refunds</b>	735.27	158.81	1,111.65
<b>Convention Expenses</b>	0.00	5,436.46	38,055.23
<b>Delegate Meeting Expenses</b>	0.00	1,351.70	9,461.87
<b>Total Expense</b>	37,960.72	47,872.30	335,106.12
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>5,542.88</b>	<b>7,282.24</b>	<b>50,975.69</b>

## Financial Results for July 2014

In the month of July we had a surplus of \$5,542.88. We had budgeted for a deficit of \$1,353.00. The increased surplus of \$6,895.88 in July was due to exceeding our estimates in sales, group and individual donations.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book exceeded our estimate by \$.66 for July and has exceeded our estimate by \$ 3,984.02 for 2014.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales exceeded our estimate by \$3,259.25 for July and have exceeded our estimate by \$11,751.81 for 2014. Our bronze medallion sales exceeded our estimate by \$829.74 in July and have exceeded our estimate by \$2,899 in 2014. Our chips sales were below our estimate by \$15.90 in July but have exceeded our estimate by \$1,095.03 in 2014.

Our total sales for July exceeded our estimate by \$3,259.91.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$2,164.13 for July and have exceeded our estimate by \$24,601.12 for 2014. Group donations exceeded our estimate by \$1,982.83 in July but are below our estimate by \$8,017.85 for 2014.

Our product inventory is valued at \$36,091.47.

Our expenses were over our estimate by \$253.72 in July.

Summary of the annual budget: (January 1, 2014 to July 31, 2014):

- Sales have exceeded our estimate by \$15,746.78
- Donations have exceeded our estimate by \$16,583.27
- Expenses are under our estimate by \$34,772.88
- 

Our operational reserve is fully funded.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,  
Joe H.

Executive Director  
**[director@saa-iso.org](mailto:director@saa-iso.org)**

*[Editor's Note: The ideas expressed in the Articles From Members section of The Outer Circle reflect the opinions of the authors of those articles, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the ISO or of the SAA fellowship as a whole.]*

## From the Editor

By Gary T.

One of my favorite recovery slogans is More Will be Revealed. For me, many of the spiritual principles of recovery are contained in those four little words: faith, trust, curiosity, humility and hope, along with an implicit understanding that recovery is a journey, not a destination.

Part of being on a journey, of walking a path, is that I can't always see what's ahead. Bends and hills and ravines and even mountains all must be traversed before I know what lies before me. Even when I crest what feels like the tallest mountain, I see loftier peaks on the horizon. That's the journey, the meaning, for me, of More Will be Revealed.

When I first came to the program more than six years ago, that slogan confounded me. And filled me with fear. The little I'd been willing to see of myself and my actions were shameful enough. Why would I want even more revealed?

But as I got a sponsor, worked the steps, began doing service work — first, leading a meeting, then becoming a sponsor, next joining our local intergroup — and developing a relationship with my Higher Power, the slogan came to take on a new meaning. Rather than confusion, shame and dread, it brought up gratitude, wonder and joy.

That's not to say my path is always filled with rainbows and butterflies. Far from it! But now, when I stumble into a hole, I have enough experience, strength and hope to know it's not my journey's end, nor is it cause for despair. Though the pit may seem dark and foreboding, my Higher Power has taken me here to discover a gem: More Will be Revealed.

It was in that spirit I set out on the journey to become the new editor of *The Outer Circle*. Of course, as with so many other outcomes in my recovery, I didn't even know my path was taking me there at the time. It started more than nine months ago, when I began having misgivings about the magazine publishing company I worked for. As with all publishers in the digital age, the company was struggling. Friends and colleagues were being laid off in the name of "business reorganization." I was hastily moved from being a longtime editor to a social media manager. All the while my little voice was very quietly saying, "This doesn't feel right."

Unlike in the past, I heard my little voice, nurtured it, listened to it. I talked to my sponsor about it, my fellows, my therapist, my partner. I prayed, meditated and journaled. I was gentle with myself. In short, I used all the recovery tools I'd been given on my journey thus far, knowing all the while that more would be revealed. Slowly, the little voice became louder, more distinct, until one day, when I was meditating, I heard it clearly: You're ready.

Not long after, I became a casualty of business reorganization. Suddenly, I didn't feel so ready! But I had a spiritual program of recovery, trusted SAA fellows, and faith in a loving, caring Higher Power to sustain me. I was ready, God had told me. But ready for what?

The answer, in part, came several weeks later when I received an ISO email with the job announcement for editor of *The Outer Circle*. As I read that email, never had it been more clear to me what my Higher Power intended, or how I could use my God-given skills to do vital Twelfth-Step work. With great humility, and some uncertainty, I applied. And then, I waited and waited and waited. My sponsor kept reminding me to trust in God's time, not my time. I kept working on taking actions, and letting go of outcomes. And just when I was about to accept that the path I thought God had wanted me to walk was different than I imagined, I got a call.

Several months later, here I am, writing my first editor's column for *The Outer Circle*. I do so with great gratitude for the former editor, Mike L, who after more than 12 years stepped aside so another fellow could have the opportunity to do this amazing service. I only hope I can be as faithful a steward of *The Outer Circle's* mission as Mike was those many years.

I also hope I can bring some of my own skills and abilities to the newsletter in the months ahead. And I urge you to help me along the way. Being editor fills me with humility, not so much because I'm not sure I can do the job — though it is formidable — but more so because I know *The Outer Circle* is ours. It's yours. For some, it is the only beacon of experience, strength and hope available.

So if you see the newsletter taking a turn you don't agree with, or you have ideas for what you'd like to see in it, please share your thoughts with me. I'm also always looking for those willing to share their experience strength and hope through a personal story of recovery or working the steps. New writer's guidelines and submission deadlines are available on the website at <https://saa-recovery.org/Newsletter>. You also can always email me at [toc@saa-recovery.org](mailto:toc@saa-recovery.org).

More than an editor, I hope you'll think of me as one of your trusted servants, a recovery fellow who is walking the journey with you, in the certainty that More Will be Revealed.

# God Is My Pilot

## By John S.

I am a salesman. Over the past 10 years, I have traveled to 48 states in search of sales opportunities. South Dakota and Hawaii are the two states I have not visited, yet.

What makes my travel noteworthy is not the cities I have visited, as they all look similar after a while. Rather, it is the fact that I hate to fly.

For as long as I can remember, flying has been one of my greatest fears in life. As a kid, I loathed roller coasters — anything that made me dizzy, or gave me that funny feeling in my stomach — like jumping off a diving board.

What I fear most about flying is turbulence. At 35,000 feet, when the bumps start, my heart races, my breathing increases and my whole body becomes overwhelmed with anxiety.

The "what ifs" start to race through my brain: What if the plane drops a hundred feet or a thousand feet? What if I start screaming? What if I have a nervous breakdown? And much worse, what if the plane goes down? What will I do? How will I survive?

My fear of flying caused me to do some pretty ridiculous things. On countless occasions I cancelled flights at the last minute after looking up at the sky. If the weather looked bad or the clouds were uninviting, I stayed overnight in a hotel and flew home the next morning.

For many years, I drank alcohol to calm my anxiety. A couple cans of beer became my panacea. My self-medication helped ease the uncomfortable feeling I got when I flew. The fear evaporated. Confidence returned.

But then I quit drinking, primarily because my father was a recovered alcoholic. I saw the destruction first hand.

Sober from alcohol, I flew without any emotional armor to protect myself. Soon the fear of chop (airline lingo for turbulence) came back. Fear was my master, again.

It was not until I entered Sex Addicts Anonymous, and began working the Twelve Steps, that I addressed my fears. I worked a rapid recovery program. My sponsor and I went through the Twelve Steps in about three weeks. I focused my efforts especially on Step Four — my personal inventory — by asking such questions as, "Why did I have this fear of flying? What part of self had failed me?"

As a result, I learned that my fear of flying stemmed from 1) my desire to control everything, 2) my fear of the future and 3) my dependence on self-will rather than God's will.

Throughout my life, I had always relied on myself. That was the problem. In SAA, I decided to turn my will and my life over to God. That means trusting Him — no matter what happens.

No human power could take away my fear of flying (or any other fears). But I discovered that God could, and would, if I asked Him. What started out as a desperate plea for help at 35,000 feet turned into a regular dialogue with God regarding all aspects of my life.

I came to accept the premise that I do not control outcomes, including what happens in an airplane. That is God's realm. I can only make the decision to board the plane. If God has all the power, then I don't have to worry about what might happen to me when the flight gets bumpy. He is my protector.

On a recent flight, it occurred to me that flying is similar to the journey of life. Just as there is turbulence in an airplane, so too are there bumps in life. I used to pray to God for a smooth ride, in the air and in my life. But now I pray to have God remove my fear of turbulence and give me the courage to face life on life's terms — turbulence and all. And most of all, to live life according to His will, not mine.

When I tell my friends that I have traveled to 48 states, and I hate to fly, they tell me I am crazy. But faith in a power greater than myself has enabled me to face my fears and continue my journey, professionally and spiritually.

As I am learning One Day at a Time, there will always be bumps in life. But with God as my pilot, He will always make sure I land safely.

## **Volunteer Services Needed**

*Want to be of service to the Fellowship that supports you?*

*Not sure where to get started?*

*Contact the ISO!*

or go to [www.saa-iso.org/](http://www.saa-iso.org/)

and select "Volunteer" to fill out a volunteer form.

## Dear Grace

Submitted by SAA Women's Outreach Subcommittee

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 receives. \*Names have been changed to protect anonymity\**

Dear Grace,

I am friends with some of my sobriety "sisters" (those with whom I share the same sponsor), but there is now conflict between one of them and my sponsor.

I feel uncomfortable because they are both people I care about. How do I handle this situation?

—Caught in the Middle

Dear Caught:

It's often a sign of great progress in recovery when I begin to care honestly about other people. In my addiction, I frequently didn't care much about others; my past is littered with broken and discarded relationships, including friendships. Congratulations, then, on your progress, and welcome to a new challenge of recovery: how to navigate personal relationships and set boundaries. As I said in an earlier column, I learn what is my business and what is not-my-business.

What's going on with your sponsor and her other sponsees is not your business. You can simply continue to care about and talk to both of them. Refrain from talking about either of them to the other. This is always a good rule and especially important now. Too many women, especially early in recovery, get bogged down in gossip and drama, and forget that they are in the program to work the steps.

Always remember the point of sponsorship: "most importantly, sponsors guide us through the Twelve Steps." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 13). "Sobriety sisters" and support networks, outreach calls, etc. are all just tools I have added. (By the way, many of us define "sobriety sisters" as all women in recovery. One reason is that defining the term, as in your question, implies a "mother" role for your sponsor, which is not always helpful, and can create "sibling" rivalry.) These tools should be used when they are helpful and set aside when they are not. If I cling to them, they can hamper recovery as often as they support recovery.

So what does it mean to work the steps in this circumstance? First, focus on yourself and your step work. Stay out of what is not your business. Second, the Twelve Steps "provide basic principles for living. Most of us find opportunities on a daily basis to apply one or more of the steps to some challenge in my life." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 22) For example, in this situation, Step One could be adapted to remind me that I am powerless over others and can't manage their thinking, feeling, or actions.

In this way, it is possible to use the principles in the Twelve Steps to recover from addictive sexual behavior, as well as to "guide us in the everyday challenges of life." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 61)

Best wishes to you on this part of your recovery journey,

—Grace

*Disclaimer: We cannot guarantee that this advice will be equally applicable to every woman, although it is our hope that such will be the case.*

—SAA Women's Outreach Subcommittee

***"Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings;  
Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting"***

is now available online at the ISO website store:

**[www.saa-store.org](http://www.saa-store.org)**

In addition to providing many helpful suggestions for "Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting," the pamphlet has valuable recovery suggestions and insights that are useful for ***any recovering member or group***, even if a group does not have women members.

Thank you to all who put so much hard work into producing this new addition to our SAA literature!

## Life's Challenges: A Trifecta of Potential Growth

By Moshe A.

I just got off the phone with someone I may have helped. It is an honor when people come to me for support. I am HIV+, bipolar and a grateful recovering addict. I have worked hard to take care of myself and sometimes my experiences can be shared with others who have the same challenges.

This happens when others have physical health problems and especially life threatening diseases like HIV. (Last year was the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of when I was diagnosed HIV+.) I have fought for my life along the way when I had pneumonia, bronchitis, shingles, neuropathy, strep throat and many other afflictions that thought they could get the best of me.

With great hope, belief and faith — and the wonderful blessings I have had from others who have supported me along the way — I am still here. What an experience, what a blessing, what an honor and what a gift! I personally feel I am still here to share my stories so others might gain strength just like I have from the support of others. In other words, to do 12<sup>th</sup> Step work.

Yet I still deal with depression, sometimes day to day. A bad day can be an awful day; a problem can be overwhelming; the combination of problems can seem insurmountable; or I can find myself anxious and catastrophizing.

But the biggest problem I deal with is my history of addiction. I am a recovering addict and have to continue to honor these challenges as they have the potential to creep back at any point. The slogan, One Day at a Time, is universal, but for someone who is dealing with addiction issues at the present moment, one day of sobriety is all there is, sometimes even one hour.

Just because I have years of sobriety does not mean I am not still in danger. I have the potential to go right back to my addiction if I get complacent. I must continually remember how powerless I will always be over my addiction and all the major ways it has made my life unmanageable. That's what Step One is all about: "I am powerless over my addiction and it has made my life unmanageable." Just being aware of this gives me the opportunity to explore in *what* ways I have been powerless, and *how* it has made my life unmanageable.

But I can't do it alone.

I have recovery friends who are there simply because I ask, who take time even when they are busy and who listen to me — no matter how tough it is to hear what I have to say. I often just need someone to listen; someone

who *cares*; someone who is *there*; and then often someone who also may *share* about themselves when they feel it will help — and help it does!

Whether they are professionally trained, or going through their own serious problems they listen, they *do* care! I pride myself in always trying to be a listener, too. I have a history, experiences and tough times behind me, so I can listen, care and share, drawing from the experiences of where I have been and what I have done, positively or negatively. This is vital Twelfth Step work.

So I take phone calls like I just did today. I still go to meetings regularly and make sure to make myself available to other addicts before or after the meetings as we help each other. There is no superior addict, there is no one teacher. I am a student, and I need teachers. I have four people whom I “sponsor,” which means I work with them one on one. I also have about 50 people on my call list — many of whom I talk to somewhat regularly. This is the true heart of the program: giving back that which has been given to me.

I would not be sober today and I would not have a balanced life mentally (as best as it can be... as this too is One Day at a Time) if it were not for other caring fellows who have supported me in my struggles. One wise person (who spoke for so many others) once said that addiction can lead me to failure very quickly. It is “cunning, baffling and powerful.” This person reminded me that I can end up in the gutter, in jail, in a mental institution or dead just one day around the corner. I can lose everything — and yet I can find everything.

I must also remember that along the way there will always be challenges; I will face inner strife; I will suffer hardship; and I will deal with fear, sadness, anger, worry, anxiety, depression and even many reasons to celebrate. It is in these moments I must be wary of my behaviors and myself. I will likely fail sometimes. I may succeed beyond my expectations at others. But in both these times I will be vulnerable. I must always work hard to not be complacent, so that I don’t turn to my addiction or to my dangerous patterns and past actions. I must be the most gentle with myself. I must applaud my own little successes; I must honor my “progress not perfection.”

Life can be challenging. But it is *within* these challenges, *because* of these challenges and *through* these challenges that I can grow beyond my greatest expectations. Life offers me situations and opportunities to grow, and if I don’t turn my back, I can do just that.

Find someone else to talk to and support, listen to others. Because it is in my similarities that I can find camaraderie and support, and in my differences that I can learn and grow.

*Moshe A. wrote this article based on his “Living HIV+ and Sober” workshop at the 2014 SAA International Convention in Los Angeles.*

## Sharing in Meetings of SAA

By Jim H.

Sharing is something I've been doing in meetings of SAA for more than 20 years now. Lately, I've been reflecting on how I might improve the quality/quantity of my sharing to increase my chances of recovery from this powerless state of mind and body, known as sex addiction.

What is the goal of sharing? Is it healing? Recovery? Carrying the message? Connecting? Identifying? Processing difficult emotions? Is it a combination of these?

Is it like talk therapy? If not, how is it different from talk therapy? Are there wrong and right ways to share?

One purpose of sharing is to become vulnerable. Some call this "getting real" or "admitting the exact nature of my wrongs," or "bringing the inside outside." Whatever you call it, admitting to real problems and seeking their solution, allows me to recover. I discuss or share about my problem in a way that helps me gain insight and willingness to face and deal with the many living problems that I encounter as I try to negotiate life without resorting to the comfort and escape of my addiction. These are the qualities of a share that may lead toward healing and recovery; toward being restored to sanity; toward a spiritual awakening that allows me to sustain my recovery through the ups and downs of a Life on Life's Terms.

Another place that I "share" is on the phone. Some newcomers honestly don't know what to say, so they may avoid making that life-saving call. Some old-timers may have been sharing on the phone so long that they find themselves in a rut. That's why I try to be as honest as possible about what's going on in my life. In fact, sometimes, I prefer to talk to people with less sobriety, because they seem more tolerant and less judgmental. Is this wrong? Is this just a way to preserve denial? The answer may be "yes" in some cases. But if one views this question with some compassion, then perhaps what matters most is not that I share my embarrassing middle circle activities with the "expert," but rather that I just get it out on the table and quit carrying around that 100-pound ball of shame.

Regardless of where I share, it is important to think about increasing the quality and quantity. I know that I feel best when I share from the heart about things that are really challenging me in my day-to-day living. They may sound trivial to some, or it may be hard to admit that a person who has been in recovery for so long can still struggle with middle circle behaviors, resentments, and fears, but if I'm not honest about my struggles, it seems that the power of sharing to heal me will be stunted.

And then I notice that it can become difficult to share because I'm afraid to reveal the real me. Nevertheless, I will continue to keep fighting the good

fight by making an effort to reveal both my strengths and weaknesses, my experience (good or bad), strength, and hope (even if it is waning at the time). Isn't that the purpose of sharing?

P.S. I welcome others to respond to the list of questions I've included in this piece.

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## Draw the Line

By Paul P.

Actions I take,  
Carefully outweigh  
Will this benefit me?  
Maybe not today.

Risks seem minimal,  
Can't foresee trouble  
Self inflicted misery,  
Tired of a life that's double.

Awaiting around the corner  
Excitement it will bring  
Remembering brief moments  
A past memorable fling.

Senses become aware  
Lessons I have learned  
Do not cross that line  
My selfish will is turned.

A conscious choice again,  
Tugging thoughts persist,  
I know right from wrong,  
A gentleness I insist.

I draw the line again,  
Boundaries set in stone  
Better result this time  
Never am I alone.

## Dear Will

Dear Will,

I have made most of my Ninth Step amends, and saved one of the hardest ones for last. I think I made a pretty sincere amends and the only response I got was, "The best thing you can do is to go away and leave me alone." I really wanted to have this person back in my life again. There must be some way I can do that. Should I try to make the amends a different way? Do you have any other suggestions?

—Grieving

Dear Grieving:

"No" to your first question and "yes" to your second.

Believe it or not, Will, who never says or does anything to make anybody else mad, went through a situation very similar to yours once. Will, who also never gets into unhealthy relationships, actually managed to find himself in one once upon a time, with someone he will call "J." Will did not know how much this relationship was destroying him, and, even though he is never clueless about things, he would look in the mirror each morning and wonder why he was starting to look so terrible.

This relationship eventually blew up in Will's face. Will, despite the negative consequences he was suffering as a result of the relationship, was convinced that he absolutely had to get J. back in his life, or else.

Will spent some time plotting and scheming to create the perfect situation where he could make the perfect amends and get this not-so-perfect relationship back. Fortunately for Will (although he did not know how fortunate he was at the time), his Higher Power had some other ideas. The response that J. gave Will, "I'm not ready for a relationship with you right now," was admittedly not as harsh as the response you received, and at the same time not the ideal response he was hoping for.

In some ways, this was the best reaction that Will could have gotten, because it gave him the opportunity to start looking at his very real wrongs in this situation, without his reflections being clouded by his desire to get the relationship back. (A secondary gift was that Will started noticing that he was looking better in the mirror once more.) However, Will, unhappy as he was, bowed to what was now apparently inevitable and went his way.

The story could end there, but it does not. You may be expecting the ending that "J. eventually realized what a horrible mistake he had made by

turning Will away and called and begged Will to come back into his life.” Well, it didn’t quite happen that way, other than that J. did eventually call, and of course Will came running. However, because of the work Will had done on himself in the meantime, six years to be exact, he realized over the next few weeks that this was not a healthy relationship for him. He set a couple of boundaries around some requests from J. and eventually J. just wandered away. It has been right at ten years since Will has heard from J., a much longer period of time than had passed from the time that the relationship initially fell apart and J. called Will again.

So, Grieving, Will suggests that you talk to your sponsor about this situation if you haven’t already done so. Obviously you have a sponsor since you have been working on your Ninth Step. Your sponsor will be able to help you determine what your part was in the relationship ending (you know, character defects and the like) and also what you can gain from the whole experience. Will is willing to bet, not to start using a bunch of clichés, that you will come out of this whole situation much stronger than you went into it. Will wishes you the best while you do this work.

*Will, a member of the currently inactive Men's Outreach Committee, is looking for members of the fellowship who can help get the committee active again. Please contact him at [men4saa@saa-recovery.org](mailto:men4saa@saa-recovery.org) if you are interested.*

***“Sex Addicts Anonymous and the Lesbian / Gay /  
Bisexual / Transgender Sex Addict: A Message of  
Hope for Sex Addicts in the LGBT Communities”***

is now available online at the ISO website store:

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This booklet has valuable recovery suggestions and insights that are useful for ***any recovering member or group***, regardless of sexual orientation.

Thank you to all who put so much hard work into producing this addition to our SAA literature!

# Recovery Lessons from the Wizard of Oz

By Wayne K.

The idea started years ago at my home meeting in Torrance, CA, when someone said they had monkey mind that day. They were anxious and shared that confusing thoughts were swirling around in their brain. They needed help that day.

When I moved to N.Y., the monkey mind idea morphed into flying monkeys as my home group in Syracuse is near the Oz Fest held in Chittenango, NY. L. Frank Baum (author of the Wizard of Oz) was from Chittenango, and remaining cast characters return each year to support the festival. In fact several years ago I was on a returning flight from out West, and the last two surviving munchkins were on my flight. That cellphone image is somewhere on my hard drive, but I digress.

That confusing state of mind when I am overwhelmed with things to do — work, family issues, addiction, etc. — I now call Flying Monkey Mind. The DSM V/5 does not have an official code yet for flying monkey mind, but many reading this have been diagnosed with OCD, depression, anxiety, or a whole host of clinical diagnoses.

Knowing that the convention was to return to L.A. this year I also noticed that it was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of the Wizard of Oz movie. The movie has been seen by virtually everyone, and the plot is memorable. I wondered if there was enough recovery content for a presentation besides Flying Monkey Mind.

The first thing that came to me was that the movie is black white and becomes color when Dorothy lands in Oz. Recovery thinking 101 might be to recognize that one of the barnyard scenes involves black and white thinking so I used that.

Dorothy laments in another barnyard scene how she wants to leave her troubles and go “Somewhere over the Rainbow.” That sounds like wishful thinking to me!

Rather than lose Toto to the sheriff, she runs away down the road to a traveling medicine man’s trailer. I tried to run away from my problems, only to have them follow me back to New York.

Dorothy takes the advice of the medicine man and returns home, only to be caught in a tornado. For many, that tornado is disclosure of acting out behavior. Dorothy’s disclosure is a sudden event. My sudden disclosure was when I called home for bail money. Some disclosures are like a Chinese water torture with a drip, drip, drip of discovered phone numbers, lipstick smears, or emails.

Dorothy lands in Oz, which I will call recovery. Remember your first 12-Step

meeting? Much like Dorothy finding munchkins and saying: "Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore!" I find that 12-Step rooms are full of thoughts and people I may never have met in my old way of living.

The Good Witch of the East tells Dorothy to follow the yellow brick road. It is important to note that she does not start in the middle of the bricks. She starts on the very first brick, and that very first brick on the road to Oz is Step One. That very First Step for me is to admit my powerlessness. She does not skip steps as she walks along the yellow brick road. That is a message for me to do the steps in sequence and not start at Steps Five, Six, or Seven.

Dorothy finds new friends on her road to Oz. The trip to Oz has many hazards that the Wicked Witch throws at the travelers. The Wicked Witch represents my addiction that will do anything for me not to be successful in recovery. The new friends bond together for the long arduous journey to Oz. I need friends in my meeting rooms and life so I don't feel alone. Dorothy developed a support network of friends, and I should heed that lesson.

Before they get to Oz the Wicked Witch waylays the travelers again when she puts a field of poppies in front of them. Only the Tin Man and Scarecrow are not affected by the poppies. My analogy is that the poppies represent other addictions that can pop up like "whack a moles" when I am treating my sex addiction. They are saved when the Tin Man and the Scarecrow start screaming for help. Their Higher Power, represented by the Good Witch, intervenes to make it snow and wake up the drugged travelers.

Their entrance to Oz is granted and the trudgers need to get spiffed up before seeing the Wizard. Their trip to the beauty parlor to be curled, polished, shined, and groomed is a message that I need to have my own self-care on my journey.

Dorothy's anonymity is broken when the witch writes her name in the sky! I have had my anonymity broken and it's not a pleasant experience.

The Wizard gives them a task to do, which is to get the broomstick of the Wicked Witch. I liken this to some of the things that a sponsor might require of a sponsee.

Finally the flying monkey scene happens! The Wicked Witch wants to scare the group into turning back and sends the monkeys to rough up the travelers. Dorothy is captured and the poor Scarecrow is dismembered. But friendship prevails and the healthy ones repair and re-stuff the Scarecrow with straw. This same thing happened to me when my 12-Step friends picked me up and stuffed me with good feelings or reassurance. My friends did not abandon me, but stuck by my side and continued the journey with me.

The troop returns to Oz with the broomstick and meets once again with the Wizard. The Wizard could be a sponsor, therapist, psychiatrist, etc. or someone who has all the answers but turns out to be human after all. Even when the balloon takes off without Dorothy inside the basket the Wizard proclaims he does not know how to operate it!

Once again Dorothy's higher power appears as the Good Witch. She floats down and tells Dorothy that she has had the power to return home all along! Just like with me, that power and the power to return "home" has always been inside. I just need to recognize it, and use it!

*Wayne K. wrote this article based on his "Off to See the Wizard" workshop at the 2014 SAA International Convention in Los Angeles.*

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## Relationships and Tradition Seven

by Freeman D.

*[Editor's Note: This is the seventh part of a twelve-part series called "Relationships and the Twelve Traditions."]*

*Tradition Seven: Every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting declining outside contributions.*

I learn from *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 87 "The seventh tradition ensures that every SAA group takes full responsibility for its own needs and expenses." For newly funded groups becoming self-sufficient should be a top priority. Being fully self-supporting helps them become accountable for themselves and their recovery. It may be tempting to seek outside contributions. However, in so doing the group may come under the thumb of a new taskmaster that prevents us from carrying the SAA message — and that message only.

By keeping expenses low with a prudent reserve, each SAA group may do all it can to help SAA as a whole at the local, regional, national and international levels. By each group being self-supporting, we build our self-respect and are never under any obligation for charity.

From Tradition Seven on page 88 in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, I learn of certain "needs" that each group requires. "We need ... members willing to meet ... share, experience strength and hope ... a meeting place ... SAA literature ... meeting schedules. We need volunteers to ... fulfill service commitments ... volunteers for ... chairing meetings ... sponsoring ... answering mail..."

As a recovering addict, I want to remember that I have promised myself I will go to any length to maintain my sobriety. If the group fails, I too, shall soon return to my obsessive behaviors only to sicken and die.

A word of caution is also discussed in Tradition Seven. It warns me not to rest on my laurels or to take over and be a “do all.” There should be a balance, lest I rob myself or others from fully recovering. “A group works well when all members are encouraged to serve in line with their abilities and when service positions are regularly rotated among the group members.” (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 89).

I need to strive to be fully self-supporting — spiritually, emotionally and physically for myself and others. For better or worse, in sickness and in health.

Taking care of myself in a relationship is vital for the health and welfare of that relationship. From my base of sobriety — living daily recovery — I maintain my self worth based on my innate goodness. I am able to recognize I am complete and whole just as I am. From my foundation of confidence, I am able to choose to share my life with my friends and spouse.

Friends are a vital part of all healthy relationships. It is dangerous for me to believe my mate will fill all my needs. In my own experience, I have learned that I need others to fill certain roles.

For instance, I enjoy running and training for ultra-marathons, my mate is a homebody who enjoys planting flowerbeds and playing with the dogs. Because of my different needs, I have different friends. He has friends at the garden club, whereas I have friends at the running club. By taking care of our needs, we learn that we each are responsible for ourselves.

We are a unit, both standing strong, self-supporting, neither in charge. Walking side by side, I move in the same direction. It is also important that I don't lean on him, nor he on me. For if we both attempt to lean on each other, one or both of us may fall. Take care of self first.

There is nothing I must face alone without the other by my side. By taking responsibility for my own welfare, I recognize I must and can bear the weight of my life on my own. This creates an opportunity to recognize my individual strengths, as well as our strength together.

As I continue to grow in understanding and commitment, I have learned the key to help me show my compassion: not saying anything that I cannot take back. I don't say anything to deliberately hurt my partner. I don't play mind games. If I am in doubt, I simply close my mouth, and say nothing. I may be forgiven for harm caused, however, he may never forget.

In order for me to enhance my love and commitment to my mate, I attempt to do something nice for him everyday — without him knowing — expecting nothing in return. At the end of the day, I review what I have done and work toward outdoing my creative ways of expressing my love tomorrow. Love is an action. I know I am loved by what he says and does. And he knows my love by what I say and do.

## E-mail Addresses

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The ISO of SAA Board of Trustees has established 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)

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“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts...” Step Twelve

**First:** Write from your experience, strength, and hope. Others may need to hear exactly what you have to say.

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