

THE OUTER CIRCLE

Carrying the message of hope to the still-suffering sex addict since 1988

THE PRINCIPLES WITHIN THE STEPS

PLUS

- * Scientific proof for twelve-step programs?
- * Taking action for recovery
- * Tradition Nine





International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

TOC articles contain the experiences and opinions of individual SAA members and do not represent the official views or positions of the ISO of SAA, Inc. or the SAA fellowship as a whole.

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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 1988, *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 page 30. To have an article considered for publication, see our Submission Guidelines on page 31.

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

July - August 2022

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FROM THE EDITOR

Always needed: more voices!

BY DON S.
THE OUTER CIRCLE
EDITOR

*Being in the
middle circle is
like a walking a
tightrope. I might
fall off; I might
not.*

* Semantic soapbox sidebar: I don't work my program; I work -the- program of Sex Addicts Anonymous as the centerpiece and keystone of my recovery. I had a sponsor who used to hammer on that point. Kept me a little humbler.

As I mentioned in a previous column, I love good metaphors and similes. There's something elegant in the distillation of a truth down to a succinct, cogent image.

I also love how the program* works. As I go to meetings, work the steps, share with and listen to others, and study the literature, I am exposed to a shower of morsels of truth. Early in my recovery, it was mostly a challenging but reassuring blur. Now, I am better at recognizing bits here and there, though I've no doubt that plenty slips by unnoticed.

What I love is that, a snippet from a reading here, a comment from a fellow recoverer there, a little time, a little thought/prayer/meditation, etc., and, occasionally, a light bulb goes off. This happened for me in my home-group meeting this week. So, after all that buildup, here's your simile for the month:

Being in the middle circle is like a walking a tightrope. I might fall off; I might not. If I fall off, there may be a net, there may not. But regardless, even if I don't fall off, it's a sure bet that I won't get very far very fast. And even if I make it to the other end, it will be pretty much the same as where I started, and no closer to any life-giving resource.

Other than that, once more, every article in this issue, other than Dear Grace, has been penned by a guy. I just finished three weeks in the orchestra of an area theater. One of the joys of that job is working closely with just about every gender-identification one can think of. I would love to see more of that diversity in the submissions for *The Outer Circle*, so MORE VOICES PLEASE!

If you have some experience, strength and hope to share, please consider putting digital or analog pen to paper and submitting it for consideration. We always need two feature articles:

i) Living in Sobriety: ~500-800 words (one to two pages), minimum five years sobriety

ii) Stories of Service: ~300 words, no sobriety requirement.

Instructions for submitting are on page 30. I look forward to reading your voice!

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Convention and Conference

BY PAUL M.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ISO OF SAA, INC.

*The convention
will be held at
a different time
than in the past.
Please call the
office for more
information.*

The 2022 convention was fairly well attended. We had about 160 in attendance face-to-face and about ten on-line for those sessions. It was great seeing some of our friends face-to-face after two years of only being on-line. Unfortunately, all the numbers are not in at press time, but we did not meet our room guarantee and had to buy more food to meet our food and beverage minimums. We will relay the final numbers to the fellowship as soon as they are available.

Now we are looking forward to the 2022 Conference in October and the next convention in 2023. The convention will be held at a different time than in the past. Please call the office for more information. This move was requested for 2022, but the contract had already been signed. Also, due to local events, hotels were more expensive.

Speaking of the 2022 ISO annual Conference meeting, the motions should be submitted by press time and will be posted on the service website shortly. The area assemblies need to be electing a delegate and helping them get to Houston for the Conference. The groups need to discuss the motions and give their group conscience to the Group Service Representative (GSR). The GSR brings that group conscience to the area assembly. The area assembly elects a delegate that brings the group conscience to the Conference. That way we can hear the voice of the fellowship at the Conference. This only works if every group has a GSR and every area assembly elects a delegate. The 2022 Conference will be hybrid so delegates can come virtually, but we cannot guarantee the virtual attendance will be anything like the face-to-face attendance. I look forward to seeing you at this year's Conference.

DEAR GRACE

Reaching out to other women

BY WOMEN'S
OUTREACH
COMMITTEE

*We hope that
you will join the
list and thereby
become part of the
community.*

Dear Grace,

I hear there's a phone list of women members. It would be great to be able to call women in recovery. How can I get this list?

Signed,

Willing

Dear Willing,

I commend you for reaching out for support from other women members. The list you've heard about is probably the "SAA Women's Outreach List" (also known as "The Grace List") maintained by the SAA Women's Outreach Committee (WOC) as part of our effort to reach out to women newcomers in SAA and help them find support. We hope it helps to build a sense of community among women in SAA, because many women have the experience of being the only woman, or one of a few women, in their local meeting.

To receive the list, please email grace@saa-women.org and request to be added. You will receive a reply with further instructions on what information you need to provide to be on the list. You may feel uncomfortable placing your name on this group phone list. Be assured there is some flexibility in what information is included, to help maintain anonymity. You may decide to use only your first name or a nickname; you may include your phone number only, your email address only, or both forms of contact information. In reality, the list does not have every woman in SAA on it, only those who choose this form of networking. You may choose, instead, to request phone numbers from members at face-to-face meetings, telemeetings, and on-line meetings.



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.*

You may have noticed that I use the phrase “request to be added” rather than simply “request to receive a copy” of the list. We hope that you will join the list and thereby become part of the community. By putting our names on the outreach list, we commit to our own recovery. We take a step out of isolation and make ourselves available to others. Service deepens our program at every stage of recovery. No matter how new you are, when you reach out to others, you do as much for yourself as for them. Always, the simple action of answering a phone call or email is a service.

The Outer Circle

Whether you decide to join the list or not, always feel free to email me. I look forward to hearing about your progress in recovery!

**In service,
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
Committee**

Taking Action



BY DAVID IN NC

I thought I understood Step Three. After all, the entry into my faith tradition was praying a prayer at the end of a gospel tract—isn't saying such prayers of surrender and commitment the essence of turning my life and will over to the care of God?

I've prayed such prayers many times, often in the throes of grief after acting out. When a former "raging-atheist" (his words) in the program told me that the secret to his recovery was to get on his knees and pray, I was angry and confused. I had been earnestly praying on my knees long before this guy even considered the practice. Yet as often as I turned my life and will over to the care of God by saying prayers, I would find myself once again acting out, wondering how I got back to this place as if I had never left.

The Step Three language in the AA Twelve and Twelve was puzzling to me. Bill W. goes on and on about willingness being the entry key to a "faith that works." That is, a faith that actually does something, not merely thinks something even if the thinking is a good prayer. My revivalist background led me to believe that what counts is this prayerful inner decision and commitment of the heart. Yet, this decision wouldn't stick for me. It was a faith that didn't work very well at all.

Over time, it began to dawn on me that Step Three isn't simply a mental prayer step. It is an action step. Stating that I turn my life over to my higher power isn't partic-

ularly wrong. For me, it was simply impotent—until I began to put hands and feet on such a commitment through action.

My sponsor had specific suggestions for action. By the time I washed up on the shores of recovery rooms, business travel was synonymous with acting out. Looking over my ritual, there were lots of places to admit my powerlessness over situations and take decisive action that would circumnavigate these places.

For example, there are two ways to the airport—one that passes by an adult bookstore where I had spectacularly acted out, one that does not. Turning my life and will over to the care of God meant taking the less triggering route. I was to call each day. I was to keep the TV off. I had specific places to spend my evenings - meetings, religious services, even sitting in a monastery listening to monks pray the Psalms.

The most difficult had to do with the phone book. In those days, the Yellow Pages, a phone directory, was kept in each hotel room. One of the first things I did when I entered my room was to find the Yellow Pages and look up certain sections (usually prime spots for sex ads) hoping that some sex addict before me hadn't ripped the pages out. Of course, I had "no intention" of calling. However, the compulsion had been triggered and I craved all the more. By the end of the week, the obsession was so great, there was no possible way that I was not going to follow through.

In recovery, my new action when I entered the hotel room was to take the Yellow Pages out of the drawer and march it up to the front desk. I would say, "Hi, I'm in a program and I don't need this in my room. Can you keep this for me?" As lame as I felt, my request was always met with, "Sure. No problem."

I'm relatively intelligent for an insane person. I know that such an action is not a foolproof safeguard. I could go to the business center and get another Yellow Pages. I could drive downtown and cruise until I found something. I could go back to the front desk and ask for a Yellow Pages because some idiot removed it from my room. But somehow this turning my life and will over to the care of God through specific, directed action by doing something that I would not normally do on my own, had changed something. It nudged me onto a path where I was doing a business trip as a man in recovery with my life turned over to the care of God, not as a sex addict.

On the road back, an hour and a half from my home, I pulled off the freeway to an ice-cream parlor and ordered a mint-and-chip hot-fudge sundae. As I sat at the outside table, I called my sponsor and told him that I was sitting at a picnic table eating my victory sundae. I've had many successful business trips since. ☺

The Principles within the Steps



How they have
contributed
greatly to my
sobriety

BY PAUL P

I came to SAA broken and am in my seventeenth year of the program. Throughout my years in the program, the steps have proven to be the spiritual solution to my problem. I have worked the Steps several times and I have taken others through the Steps; however, I came to realize the principles are the hidden jewels within each step. They are the virtues. I believe they are the reason I have a meaningful sobriety.

My addiction robbed me of so much: time, energy, sense of self-worth, career advancement. My recovery has given to me the steps, the fellowship, a way to heal from the inside-out.

Behaviors that I no longer engage in include pornography, compulsive masturbation, anonymous sex, sex talk with strangers, and paying for sex. My formula for success in the SAA program has included attending a lot of meetings, and service work including sponsoring others, serving on committees, chairing meetings, and reaching out to newcomers.

I have detailed the principles that correspond with each step. Each principle has safeguarded my sobriety and kept me from acting out. A spiritual principle helps guide me so I can avoid conflict with others, show gratitude in my life and improve connection with myself, others, and my Higher Power. Following is my application of the principles and how they help me live a more spiritual life.

Step One. Honesty and Acceptance. *We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior—that our lives had become unmanageable.*

I was in utter denial that the addiction caused any problems in my life or that it was as bad as it was. I came into the program knowing that I had to break through this denial, accept that I had a disease, and that I was powerless over it. How I apply this principle within Step One is by being honest about my inner and middle circle and by being totally accountable and transparent—from internet accountability software, to working weekly with a sponsor, to sharing in meetings. It means honesty with friends and family—enforcing my boundaries and letting the people in my life know when they have gone too far. I accept that I cannot do this alone, and that I need help.

Step Two. Hope. *Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

Step Two is about finding a faith in some Higher Power and never giving up on this faith. I now believe that there is hope for me to heal and find a better way of living, of facing my addiction and my difficulties. I know that this program has worked for thousands of others before me and it can work for me, too. I extend hope to my everyday life understanding that, as long as I believe in the possibility of a better outcome and have willingness to change, then I have paved the way for meaningful change to take place in my life.

Step Three. Surrender (Faith). *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.*

In Step Three, I set aside my preconceived beliefs and allow the God of my understanding to guide my actions and bring about an outcome. I know that I will work Step Three if I make a commitment to recovery by attending meetings, working with a sponsor, and making outreach calls. As the Green Book states, “We work the Third Step whenever we choose recovery over addiction” (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 30).

Step Four. Courage. *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

I work Step Four by abandoning fear and confronting my past thoroughly and thoughtfully. I find courage to look at my life with a new lens, seeing things from different angles than before. I understand when I am out of alignment with my values beliefs and attitudes. I do a fear and resentment inventory on demand if I have issue with someone and I cannot see my part so easily.

Step Five. Integrity (Trust). *Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*

Today I have integrity in all my relationships including my sponsor, those I sponsor,

my family, my neighbors, and my co-workers. Having integrity, I live honestly, and I am an open book. I do the next right thing and have a conscience in my dealing with others. I treat others the way I would want to be treated.

Practicing these principles in my daily life, I have learned to develop a more effective way to live in this world.

Step Six. Willingness. *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*

At this point I am willing to allow God (Higher Power) to take away all my character defects and I am ready to move past them. I have the willingness to change. Willingness is crucial for me to succeed in this program and in everyday life. I am willing to take suggestions from others, make and receive phone calls, and add new things to my circles if necessary.

Step Seven. Humility. *Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.*

In Step Seven I am released from the stronghold that my defects of character have on my life. Humility means that I realize I am not the center of the universe. I become “right-sized” and I see myself as part of something rather than the most important person in the room. I look at things as a level playing field and that everyone in recovery comes in broken and recovers through the same

Twelve Steps. I keep in mind Tradition Three which states, “The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.”

Step Eight. Love. *Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.*

In Step Eight I am willing to acknowledge the effects of my behavior and look at this out of love for those that I care about. I am willing to see my part in the situation and how I may have overstepped a boundary. I see things from others’ points of view and have a greater empathy. I do all of this out of love and to ensure that this will not happen in a future interaction.

Step Nine. Responsibility. *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

I take responsibility in my life by admitting mistakes, seeing where I am at fault. I apologize when necessary, and make restitution when appropriate. Throughout this process, I am drawn closer to God. I do this on a regular basis as it brings resolution and closure. I take responsibility in my everyday life through proper self-care and grooming, getting medical checkups, ensuring that I get enough rest, spending money on things I need, and following up on things regularly.

Step Ten. Patience/Perseverance. *Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*

This step brings my work in Steps

One–Nine into focus daily. I see where I was selfish, distrustful, and abrupt. I look for examples of how I was grateful, loving, and of service to others. When I have conflicts, I promptly examine my wrongdoing and admit my part. I use this principle of patience as a barometer for how my program is working. I persevere at this daily inventory and use this to track my daily progress.

Step Eleven. Awareness (Spirituality). *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.*

Spirituality includes acknowledging my connectedness to others. It allows me to understand that my healing comes from insights I get through prayer and meditation practice daily. I improve my conscious contact daily and I am guided toward better decisions and a better way forward.

Step Twelve. Service. *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.*

I learned about the meaning of service as a member of SAA. Service is how I approach the “we” part of this program. I embrace service as a way of life, and I help others as freely as I have been helped. I help carry the message by offering to sponsor others, serving on committees, starting new meetings, and more. Service is the cornerstone of my program. It is one of the main ways I maintain my years of sobriety.

The principles that I have outlined here have made a significant contribution to my everyday program, and they are the basis for my continued sobriety. Practicing these principles in my daily life, I have learned to develop a more effective way to live in this world, not act out, and find meaning, purpose, and joy. I am so grateful for all of these principles as I practice them daily in my life. ©

Contact the ISO:

- » Phone: 713-869-4902
- » Email: info@saa-recovery.org
- » Board: board@saa-recovery.org
- » Literature Committee: litcom@saa-recovery.org
- » Conference Steering Committee (CSC): csc@saa-recovery.org
- » More on page 30



In Absence of Scientific Proof

BY JIM L

Many scientists, including psychologists and psychiatrists, will tell you that there is no proof that a Twelve-Step program really works. How do they draw such a blanket conclusion in the face of the experience of millions of addicts, who have found recovery in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotic Anonymous, Sex Addicts Anonymous, and other Twelve-Step programs?

The key word in such assertions is usually science or scientific. For the pure scientist or wannabe, there is no hard data that can be analyzed to produce such proof. After all, the Twelve-Step program is an anonymous program. Membership rolls and attendance records are not kept. Outcomes are known to members in a local meeting but are not recorded and certainly not published or broadcast.

To the skeptics and naysayers, I would suggest: attend a few open meetings. Listen to the personal stories of transformation, and then tell me that it does not work.

In SAA, most meetings are closed to non-addicts. Furthermore, it is difficult to design and carry out a study that would prove efficacy. Such “soft” studies, as might be done in the social sciences, do not yield the kind of conclusions desired by those who insist on “hard” data. We are left, therefore, with anecdotal reports of success.

Regarding occasional articles, blog posts, or podcasts eschewing the Twelve-Step program as folklore or reporting that the author tried it and it didn’t work, I have been able to identify in their own words specific reasons why the program did not work for them. I would summarize those criticisms with the simple statement that, if you do not work the program, it will not work—guaranteed!

Examples include attending two or three meetings and declaring it futile, failing to get a sponsor, and almost always not, in fact, working the program as initially prescribed by the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous and adapted by multiple other addiction recovery programs.

So, to the skeptics and naysayers, I would suggest: attend a few open meetings. Listen to the personal stories of transformation, and then tell me that it does not work. The success of the Twelve-Step program is evidenced by changed lives and by restored relationships—not by sterile analysis in the halls of science.

I am a scientist, and I love empirical data that answers hard questions. But I cannot deny the success observed in the rooms of SAA every day. I cannot deny the overflowing gratitude of a spouse who has observed a radical transformation in their partner’s life and behavior.

In *Sex Addicts Anonymous* we read, “What we gain in this program is a blueprint for full and successful living, whatever may come” (page 61). I cannot deny the radical changes experienced by the hundreds, thousands, or perhaps millions of addicts who have worked the Twelve-Step program and are living full and productive lives.

Skepticism may make for popular print, but changed lives are all the proof of efficacy that I need. ☺

LifeLine donations provide steady income that allows the ISO to operate and help groups carry the SAA message.

Become a LifeLine partner today by calling 713-869-4902 or by going to saa-recovery.org and clicking “Contribute.”

LIVING IN SOBRIETY

Using program work — and your outer circle — to stay sober

BY LES J

This article has been reprinted from the September – October 2015 issue of The Outer Circle.

Denial is easy to see in others but difficult to see in myself.

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 spon-

sor 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-

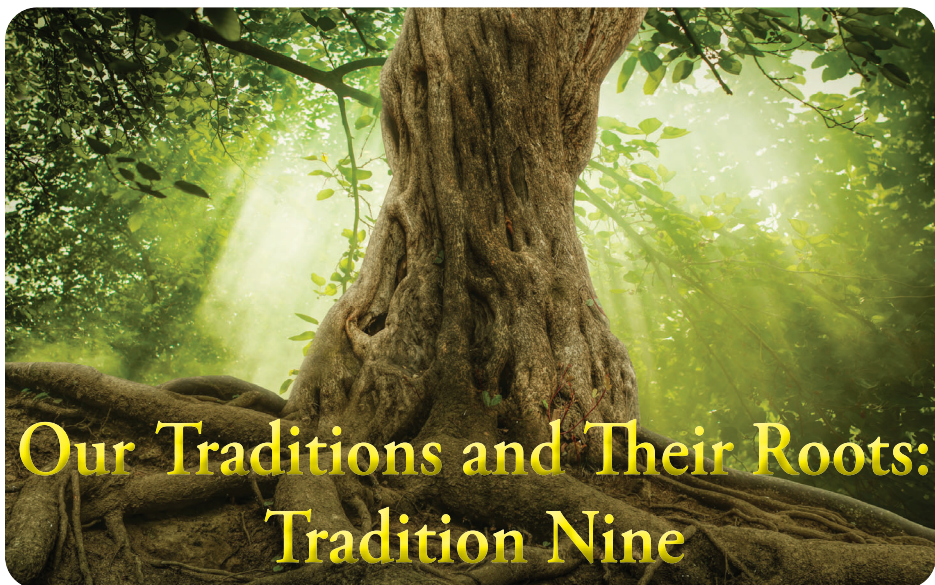
family was lacking in support. Although I was polite, I still had a large ego. My concept of Higher Power is not well defined. Still, the main thing to know is that my Higher Power is a lot bigger than I am. Humility doesn't come easy. And it is really hard to ask for help.

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 five or more years of sobriety and would like to celebrate by writing a Living in Sobriety column, please contact toc@saa-recovery.org.



Our Traditions and Their Roots: Tradition Nine

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

Editor’s Note: This is the tenth in the series that looks to the Green Book’s exposition of each Tradition, along with the history of the problem each Tradition sought to address from AA source material. Authors have varied across the series.

BY ANONYMOUS

At first glance, Tradition Nine may appear high above and far away from us as individual members of SAA. On another level, it may even seem impractical or unnecessary. But on closer look, we realize that, along with other traditions, it saves us from falling into the outside world’s organizational model, and it sets the tone for a model of service, in which we identify our “leaders” more appropriately as trusted servants.

Of course, the opening phrase—“SAA, as such”—refers to the fellowship as a whole, which includes any person who desires to stop addictive sexual behavior and who participates in a local group. The local group, therefore, is the foundational unit making up the fellowship. Local groups are autonomous (Tradition Four), held together by a singleness of purpose (Tradition Five). The only limitations placed on local groups are actions that would adversely impact other groups or the fellowship as a whole. Spiritual principles and traditions—not

treaties, contacts, bylaws, or any other human authority—provide the glue that binds the fellowship together.

From a practical standpoint, however, it is necessary for someone to take care of the day-to-day tasks and logistics in order for groups to meet and to function effectively and in order to have the resources needed for carrying the SAA message of recovery—support services that require more resources than can possibly be provided by individual local groups.

At the local level, many groups within a city or finite geographical area have developed intergroups that can support their constituent local groups by providing certain services more efficiently than individual groups could provide on their own. Examples include handling donated funds, serving as a local literature clearing house, maintaining informational and contact resources such as a website, email contact info, or a phone line, as well as sponsoring educational seminars and retreats and conducting local outreach efforts.

At the international level, service functions include publishing SAA literature, creating and managing informational websites, maintaining meeting data for seekers, supporting large-scale outreach efforts, and organizing and managing international conferences and conventions.

Toward that end, the fellowship—“SAA, as such”—created a

service organization, the International Service Organization (ISO), which is directly responsible to the fellowship it serves. As a nonprofit corporation, the ISO is organized only to the extent necessary to manage the business involved in carrying out the tasks assigned to it. A Board of Trustees is responsible for managing the legal, financial, and operational details of the corporation. The Literature Committee is responsible for the content of SAA publications, and the Conference—made up of representatives (delegates) elected by members of the fellowship—provides the spiritual oversight and guidance of the corporation.

All of these organizational efforts are developed under the caveat that they are responsible to those they serve—intergroups are responsible to their constituent groups and the members of those groups. The ISO is responsible and responsive to the fellowship, the wishes of which are expressed through the ISO Conference.

While local groups, intergroups, and the ISO are internally organized, they are constrained by Tradition Nine to avoid a hierarchical structure that is seen in many governing bodies, corporations, and outside organizations, thus maintaining the spiritual concepts of equality of all members, accountability to the fellowship, and a culture of service throughout SAA.

Next issue: Tradition Ten. ©

DEAR WILL

Non-binary members at gender-specific meetings

BY WILL

*Group autonomy
may need to be
balanced with
principles laid
out in the other
eleven traditions.*

Dear Will:

I looked through previous *Outer Circle* editions for the fellowship's experience, strength, and hope on this topic and was not successful and hope you may be able to address my question. I attend a local SAA meeting that is a men's meeting. We rarely have women show up at the meeting and when this has occurred, we have informed them that our group is for men only and referred them to the meeting list on the SAA website to find meetings that would be open for them as there are no women's or mixed group meetings in our region. Recently someone tried (unsuccessfully) to attend our men-only meeting who stated they do not identify as male. They said they do not identify as female, either, as they are non-binary. This was quite confusing for some of us. One attendee said it did not matter if they identified as male, only if they were male. This drew quite a response from a few members and yet others said it is a meeting for men only and if this non-binary individual was not a man they could not attend. They said our group conscience had decided a long time ago that our meeting would only allow men to attend. This was an awkward situation as the individual brought up concerns of discrimination and fairness so we took a group conscience and voted that they could not stay. I guess this person might encounter a similar situation at a women-only meeting.

What do you think an SAA men-only group should do in this type of situation?

Dear Men-Only Group:

Thanks for bringing up a question that may come up for other groups. I am going to get right to answering your question...What do I think an

SAA men-only group should do in this type of situation? My answer is simply to avoid it. Unless your group wants to wade into a prolonged and controversial discussion of who is and who is not entitled to say they are a man, develop screening tests for potential members, and establish a criterion that determines if someone is “man enough” to attend a men’s only meeting I would recommend the group get back to the focus of carrying the SAA message of hope to the still suffering sex addict.

In looking at the Twelve Traditions, it would seem that group autonomy, as detailed in Tradition Four, may be the only point that supports your group’s selective membership as it provides groups the freedom to serve specific populations (men, women, minors, professionals, etc....) within our fellowship. This, however, may need to be balanced with principles laid out in the other eleven traditions in determining how your group, or other groups, approach this issue.

Tradition One: Our Common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity. Has your group considered how excluding people from your meeting may, in fact, change what we mean by the words OUR COMMON WELFARE?

Tradition Three: The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior. Is your group

putting other membership requirements on individuals beyond the desire to stop addictive sexual behavior? What is the difference between SAA membership and meeting or group attendance and participation? Would it be appropriate for a group to have other membership considerations besides gender identity such as race, religion, political party affiliation?

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SAA as a whole. Our literature says the group autonomy described in Tradition Four should be balanced with the awareness that we are all part of a greater whole—the fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous. How could this situation impact not just your group or specific individuals in your group, but how could it impact other groups and SAA as a whole?

Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers. You mentioned that there are no mixed or women’s meetings in your region. So, there’s no way that half or more of the population in your region can access the healing you cherish for yourselves. Perhaps there are some members in your group that would be willing to start a mixed meeting so that all still-suffering addicts can find help.

Tradition Ten: Sex Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence

© Continued on page 23...

STORIES OF SERVICE

Why I serve

BY ANONYMOUS.

*I can help make
the world a little
better place by just
reaching out a hand
to my fellows.*

I'm one of those people you might see at a "double winners" meeting. This evening I have been reflecting on Dr. Bob's (Alcoholics Anonymous) reasons for doing service and how they ring true for me.

First of all, because the gift of sexual sobriety was so freely given to me through the members and message of SAA, it is only fitting that I should try to pass it on to the next pilgrim coming up the path behind me. I can help make the world a little better place by just reaching out a hand to my fellows. I have some duties to fulfill on this big, blue marble as it orbits around the sun.

Second, I enjoy it. Well, most of the time I enjoy it. It's a lot like my recovery: nobody said it was going to be easy, but it does keep getting better. Before recovery, I used to think I had some good friends. A few of them are still around, but I have never had the level of intimacy and admiration for them that I have for the people I have worked with in local groups, and my intergroup, area, and ISO committees.

Next, I can make some repayment. I am indebted to those who were there for me when I had nowhere else to go. It is not the kind of debt that has a dollar amount tied to it. Some of those folks have passed away, and a few have gone back out to do more research, but most of them are still setting an example for me. If I honestly and humbly discern what I can do with the things my Higher Power drags across my path, I can do my part to help carry the SAA message to the still-suffering sex addict.

And last but certainly not least, in the example set by Dr. Bob, service helps keep me sober. It's like putting money into a bank account. I never really

know when I am going to have to make a withdrawal, so I need to make sure there is always something there for emergencies. Service is that currency. Service supports my belief in myself, the program, my fellows, and my Higher Power. Service connects me with others and keeps me out of my isolation condition.

It works for me if I work it! ☺

From the Editor: The term “double-winner,” I believe, originated in Al-anon to refer to members who were also alcoholics recovering in AA. It means someone who is recovering in more than one program for more than one condition.

Stories of Service inspire others to be of service. Send your 250-300-word story to toc@saa-recovery.org.

☺ ...continued from page 21.

the SAA name ought never be drawn into public controversy. Our fellowship has really only one concern, recovery from sexual addiction through the program of Sex Addicts Anonymous. Could the individual and collective group response in this matter create a public controversy? It may already have.

Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. What spiritual principles are behind excluding certain people or groups of people from your group? Wouldn't excluding a non-binary individual from a men-only meeting require getting some very personal information and making a personal judgment based on how you feel about that information? Beyond knowing that someone is seeking recovery from sexual addiction, is there really any other information we need to know?

It saddens me to learn of any individual seeking recovery from SAA being turned away. Yes, groups may choose to specialize their membership, but, especially in this situation, it would seem that doing so may require turning a blind eye to several of our traditions and turning your back on someone in need.

**Sincerely,
Will**

FROM THE BOARD

A call to service

BY WAYNE K.

BOARD MEMBER

*We value your
input. Email the
board at [board@
saa-recovery.org](mailto:board@saa-recovery.org)*

I was going to buy a certain car, but my 150-lb. Newfoundland dog wouldn't fit comfortably, so I ended up with a full-size van. The showroom staff now has the story of a lifetime about the guy who brought his humongous dog into the showroom to see if it would fit.

For a major purchase, most of us will consult our life partners and families. With a smaller family, sometimes decisions are made faster than with a large family. Do any of you have family of origin issues that could make decision-making harder?

Take all of that and now let's make potential life-altering, long-range decisions with ten strangers. Okay, not total strangers, but acquaintances who meet monthly. It's hard to find consensus on things like the SAA website, new literature, SAA Connect, or all committee ideas.

Somewhere between the two could be a description of the SAA Board of Trustees. Covid made having any face-to-face meeting impossible until February. I knew some board members from prior committee work and of course the ubiquitous Zoom meetings. It's a different thing to sit down in a conference room, for a day or two, with those ten people. You can make the same argument for the annual conference and convention. Most experiences are better in person.

Someone once told me in a meeting that boards can be of three types: 1. The do-nothing, laissez-faire board thinks that everything is on an even keel, fair winds, and good sailing, so don't do anything to upset the path we are on. 2. The activist board wants to leave a legacy of change. Their actions are opposite of the do-nothing board. For

FROM THE BOARD

the activist board, it's all about change, sometimes for the sake of change. 3. The measured response board responds to challenges as they arise. This board is the medium flavor of the first two. In reality, there are no absolutes but a continuum that each board is on. The continuum is best measured over time, not by one subject or one meeting.

What do you suppose SAA will look like in twenty or thirty years? When I started attending meetings there was no Green Book. There was very little conference approved literature. Now, twenty-five years since my first SAA meeting, one can find all our current literature on our website.

When the SAA Board of Trustees met in Houston in February, some of the questions asked were:

- What will SAA look like in thirty years?
- Why isn't sex addiction as accepted as alcoholism?
- How do we carry the SAA message of recovery to under-served communities?
- How do we create a culture of service within SAA?
- What can we do promote better communication within SAA?
- How can we train new committee members to get up-and-running faster?

If you have ever heard of things like PI/CPC, OPCOM, ICC, or other acronyms, and wondered what they were, then imagine that and a dozen more for a new person in a meeting. Someone in the last year suggested that we create a glossary. It is a great idea. It hasn't been done yet, but it should be a tactic for the communication goal team.

What if some great ideas start bumping into our Twelve Traditions? The meeting room in Houston was papered with flip chart paper. Almost two entire walls were covered with suggestions, ideas, and goals. A couple of times I got up and walked into the hallway to stretch my legs and converse with another board member because "they" weren't doing it my way! Someone once compared these very long goal-meetings to making sausage. You take all these different ingredients, blend them together, squeeze the daylight out them, and put them in a package to be cooked to make delicious sausage. I've been in a sausage factory. It gets messy and the floor gets slippery. I happen to like many different types of sausages, so this analogy works for me.

At the end of the day, the conference room had the look of hard work! Flip chart paper was decorating the walls. Empty coffee cups, water bottles, and soft-drink containers reminded me that the fuel of creativity has not changed.

This is where you, the *Outer Circle* read-

ISO NEWS

er, come in. Board and committee members have a shelf life. We are not going to be able to, nor should we do this forever. SAA needs new committee and board members. I have been in several Fellowship ISC (Internal Standing Committee) meetings and heard all the complaints that one can think of, including pleas for more resources, diversity, inclusion, literature, ideas, etc.

You, dear reader, are the answer. You are the wind in the sails of SAA. Step right up and grab a seat because you are the next generation of leaders. Please submit your service résumé at <https://www.saa-iso.org/svc/index.php>.

Approved Board Actions

April

- ISO travel policy amended

May

- Approved financial reports
- Reconstituted Diversity Committee as Reaching Underserved Communities Committee

Discussion of the Twelve Concepts in SAA Service

The Twelve Concepts Subcommittee of the CSC (Conference Steering Committee) invites you to join us for a discussion about the proposed Twelve Concepts for SAA Service. We have met by video conference beginning February 19. Each session will last approximately ninety minutes, and the multiple sessions will provide opportunities for members of the fellowship to offer feedback on the concepts.

At the 2021 meeting of the ISO Conference, the delegates approved a method of adopting or changing our core spiritual documents. A draft version of the proposed concepts is now in a minimum of one year of review by the fellowship at large. The concepts, which have been under development since 2018, are available for review and study during the next year, before a motion to approve these concepts is presented at the 2022 meeting of the Conference.

The discussion sessions will consist of a high-level overview of the proposed concepts, discussing how the concepts apply to all levels of service within SAA and why they are important for all members of the fellowship. Techniques that groups may use to discuss the concepts will also be covered, and time will be available for open

ISO NEWS

discussion concerning our experience, strength, and hope around the concepts and the spiritual principles they express.

The remaining discussions will be held on July 30, and an additional session is also planned for Wednesday evening, September 14. Members of the Concepts Subcommittee are also willing to meet with a group, an intergroup, or an area assembly if a more detailed presentation is desired.

For more information about the discussion sessions, email info@saa-recovery.org.

List your SAA Event on the SAA Website

Is your group, intergroup, or area planning an SAA retreat, workshop, or other event? You can have it listed (and view other listings) on the SAA outreach site at <https://saa-recovery.org/news-events/>. A link to the form to submit your event is just above the “Events” section. After submitting, please allow up to five days (excluding weekends) for your submission to be reviewed and approved.

Get involved in International Service!

Would you like to give back to our fellowship? International service is a great way to get more involved in the SAA fellowship, deepen your recovery, and help reach suffering sex addicts worldwide.

The Conference Nominating Committee (NomCom) presents a slate of nominees at the annual Conference meeting in October to fill open positions on the Board of Trustees, Literature Committee, Conference Steering Committee, Conference Area Coordinating Committee, and Conference Nominating Committee. If you are interested in serving on any of these committees and you meet the guidelines for international service, we encourage you to fill out a service résumé!

For more information about the positions and for a copy of the Guidelines for International Service, please visit the service website saa-iso.org and click on the International Service tab. Contact the ISO office via phone, (713) 869-4902, or email, info@saa-recovery.org, for the username and password to access these documents.

Have you filled out a service résumé in the past? We encourage you to fill out a new resume each year before June 30th, 2022. All applicants will be entered into a raffle to win free convention registration to the 2023 convention.

Completed service résumés should be emailed to info@saa-recovery.org or mailed to Nominating Committee, ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

ISO NEWS

Carry the message where desperately needed!

Writing and sponsoring prisoners by correspondence continues to be the mainstay of the ISO prisoner outreach program. In addition, the Prisoner Outreach Committee has encouraged members of the fellowship to consider the possibility of starting SAA meetings in a nearby prison. As a result of the pandemic, a new possibility has emerged—namely, meeting by video-conference.

While face-to-face remains the preferred meeting modality in most situations, recent experience in Arizona suggests that meeting by video-conference can open new opportunities to carry the SAA message of recovery into prisons.

PI/CPC (Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community)

The Twelfth Step says that, “we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.” At the ISO level, this is done in part through the work of the Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) committee. If you would like to work the Twelfth Step at the ISO level, contact PhillipB@saa-iso.net or call the ISO at 713-869-4902.

Represent Your Intergroup or Group in the Intergroup Communications Committee (ICC) and Help Your Local Meetings

In the spirit of the First Tradition, the ICC “exists for the purpose of facilitating communication amongst intergroups, encouraging groups to carry the SAA message to the sex addict still suffering—our one primary purpose—sharing best practices, helping new intergroups to become established, and recommending changes to the SAA *Intergroup Guide* and SAA *Group Guide*.”

Learn how other intergroups and groups engage in outreach to still-suffering addicts, including special populations like prisoners, women, LGBT, and BIPOC addicts; learn how intergroups and groups conduct retreats and practice the Seventh Tradition; and share your experience, strength, and hope in service to others.

If you would like to take part in this collaborative effort and learn from others about how to improve your intergroup and group activities, email your request to info@saa-recovery.org.

Financial Summary

Our total SAA Green Book sales were below our estimate of \$8,300 by \$3,409 in April. Our HCI sales (March’s numbers, a month behind) were \$3,010 lower than budgeted. Findaway audio sales were \$76 above our budget of \$300. For the year we are 93.00% of our estimated sales.

Our book *Voices in Recovery* sales for April were \$461 lower than our budget of \$2,400 for

ISO NEWS

April. The ISO sales were \$119 below budget while the HCI sales were \$342 lower than budget. For the year we are an average of 79.75% of our estimated sales.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales were above our estimate of \$2,200 by \$1,691 in April. For the year we are at 141.70% of our estimated sales.

Our plastic chips sales were below our estimate of \$1,200 by \$223 in April. For the year we are at 89.70% of our estimated sales.

Our bronze medallion sales were above our estimate of \$2,100 by \$710 in April. For the year we are at 86.2% of our estimated sales.

Our total sales for April were below our estimate of \$16,355 by \$3,220 in April. This is mainly from the lower HCI sales. For the year we are at 96.80% of our estimated sales.

Individual donations were below our estimate of \$41,000 by \$8,590 in April. For the year we are at 91.68% of our estimated individual donations. The general donations were below our budget by \$1,634 and the LifeLine Partners amount was \$7,007 below budget of \$29,000. Our goal is \$50,000 per month.

Group donations were above our estimate of \$9,600 by \$1,855 in April. For the year we are at 117.12% of our estimated group donations. General group donations were \$1,518 above our budget of \$6,800 and group LifeLine Partners are \$137 above our budget of \$2,800.

Our total donations were \$6,735 below the budgeted amount of \$50,600. For the year we are at 96.37% of our estimated donations.

Our product inventory is valued at \$70,898.

Our operational reserve is fully funded at \$179,585. Our estimated 3-month reserve is \$175,691.

Our total expenses were \$3,584 lower than our budget of \$74,637.

Our Net Income was \$5,818 below our budget of -\$11,781.

For April of total income was \$58,965, our cost of goods was \$5878, resulting in a gross profit of \$53,088. Our total expenses were \$71,053 resulting in a net income of -\$17,598 which was \$5,818 lower than budget.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,

Paul M.



Executive Director

CONTACT THE ISO

Office

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Administrative Assistant: Harvey A.

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: board@saa-recovery.org

Board of Trustees and Literature Committee

Board

Andy M; Bill I; Bob L (Chair); Carl D; David H;
Eddie N; Karen S; Les J; Melissa W; Richard S;
Wayne K

Board: board@saa-recovery.org
CSC: csc@saa-recovery.org
LitCom: litcom@saa-recovery.org

Literature Committee

Cara A; Carole D; David C; Don S (TOC Editor);
Deb W; Don R; Doug S; Jackie J; Jim L (Chair);
Jim P; Maud D (Secretary); Mike K; Rachel R,
Stephen P

Calendar

The most up-to-date committee schedule and information about joining any ISO Committee can be found at saa-iso.org.

Prisoner Letter Writing Program

Writing and sponsoring prisoners by correspondence continues to be the mainstay of the ISO prisoner outreach program. In addition, the Prisoner Outreach Committee has encouraged members of the fellowship to consider the possibility of starting SAA meetings in a nearby prison. As a result of the pandemic, a new possibility has emerged—namely, meeting by video-conference.

While face-to-face remains the preferred meeting modality in most situations, recent experience in Arizona suggests that meeting by video-conference can open new opportunities to carry the SAA message of recovery into prisons. If interested in learning more—whether you are in the free world or in prison—contact the ISO office by telephone (713-869-4902), email (info@saa-recovery.org), or postal mail (PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270).

PI/CPC (Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community)

The Twelfth Step says that, “we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.” At the ISO level, this is done in part through the work of the Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) committee. If you would like to work the Twelfth Step at the ISO level, contact PhillipB@saa-iso.net or call the ISO at 713-869-4902.

LifeLine Partners

LifeLine donations provide steady income that allows the ISO to operate and help groups carry the SAA message. Become a LifeLine partner today by calling 713-869-4902 or by going to saa-recovery.org and clicking “Contribute.”

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Get Your Story Published in *The Outer Circle*

The *Outer Circle* newsletter relies on submissions from the SAA fellowship. It's a great way to carry the message to other sex addicts in the spirit of Step Twelve — and be of service! Articles may be submitted to toc@saa-recovery.org or to the ISO office. Please submit articles via email in Microsoft Word format with the **RELEASE FORM** at the bottom of this page.

Deadlines for Submission and Topics		
Jan/Feb:	“First Three Steps”	Nov 5
Mar/Apr:	“Taking Action”	Jan 5
May/June:	“Changes, Hope”	Mar 5
July/Aug:	“Celebration and Exploration”	May 5
Sept/Oct:	“Letting Go, Giving Back”	July 5
Nov/Dec:	“Prayer and Meditation”	Sept 5

Here are some general writing guidelines:

Living in Sobriety: For those with five-plus years of sobriety. 750-900 words on how you got sober and what you're doing to stay sober.

Stories of Service: 300-500 words on why you do service and how it helps your recovery.

Feature articles: 650-1,200 words on any of the topics listed above. 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 in recovery as it relates to the steps or traditions.

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.

