Volume 19, Issue 6 November – December 2025

THE OUTER CIRCLE

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

INSIDE:

The Newsletter of SAA's International Service Organization

International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

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.

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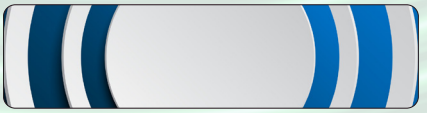

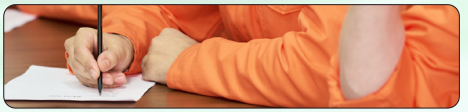

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Share *The Outer Circle* with your recovery friends in SAA and encourage them to submit their experience, strength, and hope (see page 31).

FROM THE EDITOR

In the Spirit of Service

BY ALEX B.

THE OUTER CIRCLE *EDITOR*

We would love to share your story. Submissions are acceptable online (saa-recovery.org/tocsubmission) or via email at toc@saa-recovery.org.

Of all the positive elements of our program of recovery that inspire me, the one that sends my spirit soaring the highest is our focus on acts of service.

When I am in my addiction, I center on my own needs and desires. Other people fade from existence, and my sole purpose is finding the quickest path to my own satisfaction. The selfishness and self-absorption is real.

But when I first read the language in Step Twelve, a door opened for me. As I began my process of reflection and recovery, I began practicing the effort of sharing my experience, strength and hope, so I could carry the message to others who still suffered. The solution shouldn't be locked up in my own head, I reasoned. I could help others avoid the pain and turmoil I had been living.

It started by simply raising my hand to speak, so my meetings would have content with which to engage. Eventually I found myself staying after meetings to clean up, put chairs away, and help keep our fellowship together. When I was ready, I took on sponsees and maintained other program friendships so I could help these fellows recover as well. My recovery is working best when I am giving what I have to others.

When I was in high school, a drama teacher was fond of sharing a story called "The Train Story," a parable about a group of people who came together to keep a train running. When selfishness and laziness creep in, the train grinds to a halt. My recovery works the same way – I need to remain focused on others to stay active in my recovery.

In this holiday season, may the spirit move you to find acts of service that you can make in your life as well.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Thank You One and All

BY TRACY R.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ISO OF SAA, INC.

There is so much to be grateful for in our program of recovery

November is Gratitude Month in the U.S., and this year, I am especially grateful for the SAA program and fellowship that saved and transformed my life and the lives of countless sex addicts throughout the world. I am also extremely grateful to serve as the Executive Director and for the opportunities this position provides to carry the SAA message. So I would like to thank you all for your support this year, whether it was through service, donations, or participation in an SAA meeting.

Thank you!

Here are some of the ISO's key accomplishments this year:

- The new, searchable, filterable meeting search is up and running at *saa-meetings.org*
- The new, more flexible meetings and contacts database is complete and powering the new meeting search with greater accuracy.
- Women's Outreach, LGBT Outreach, and Prisoner Outreach are welcoming newcomers and oldtimers alike and helping them make vital connections.
- SAA literature was added to the electronic tablets that are provided to many prisoners at no cost.
- Hundreds of helping professionals have learned about the SAA program.

Your support makes these things and more possible.

Moving into 2026 and beyond, we will continue revitalizing our technology infrastructure and creating a unified, mobile-friendly web presence that brings all of our sites together. We will continue to provide resources to help start meetings worldwide. We will add our literature to more tablets for placement in more prisons. We will continue working to bring hope and recovery to those who are suffering from this addiction and the devastation it brings.

Again, thank you! Thank you for serving, for donating, and for continuing to show up one day after another in recovery from sex addiction!

Safety at Conventions

BY WOMEN'S OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Those unaccustomed to mixed-gender recovery settings may want to prepare for a convention by attending mixed-gender SAA meetings locally or online.

This letter was previously published in 2023.

Dear Grace,

I am interested in going to an SAA convention. Is it safe for a woman to attend?

Signed,
Ms. Hesitant

Dear Ms. Hesitant:

Yes! For years, people of all genders in the fellowship have enjoyed safely attending the annual Convention of the International Service Organization of SAA. Many members value connecting with recovering sex addicts from different parts of the world in settings outside of meetings. The conventions include speakers, workshops, and meetings with various focuses, as well as outer circle activities such as karaoke, talent shows, and excursions to local sites.

However, these events can seem daunting at first. Members may feel overwhelmed being in a larger group of recovering sex addicts. We may not be accustomed to attending mixed-gender SAA meetings. We might be afraid we'll be triggered by something or act out in some way at the event. However, with a little preparation and support, SAA conventions can be a tremendous boost to recovery!

Those unaccustomed to mixed-gender recovery settings may want to prepare for a convention by attending mixed-gender SAA meetings locally or online. A trusted friend in recovery can be invited for support! Information about meetings can be found on the main SAA website, saa-recovery.org.

It is beneficial to make some decisions ahead of time. For example, members might plan ways to use a hotel room for self-care instead of acting out, stay connected with people who support their recovery, and set boundaries and guidelines for interacting with others. Talking with other recovering sex

addicts about their experiences attending conventions may help us know what to expect and how to safely navigate the event.

Sometimes during recovery meetings or events, we might hear something that brings up feelings, images, or urges. While uncomfortable, this is a common part of recovery from sex addiction. Many find it important to have an "In Case of Emergency" (ICE) plan. It could include a list of signs and symptoms of being triggered to help you recognize when that's happening, ideas for calming your nervous system and connecting with your Higher Power, and phone numbers of support people to text. Conventions and local SAA retreats often ask for volunteers to serve as temporary "onsite sponsors."

At the convention, there are rooms for relaxing and connecting with smaller groups of people. One of these is the Women's Outreach Room, a place where women can eat a snack, have a conversation with a friend or sponsor, or hold a spontaneous women's meeting. Another place to find serenity is the Meditation Room, where pillows, soft lighting, and gentle sounds create an atmosphere of peace where members of any gender can sit quietly and meditate together (or in solitude, if the room is empty).

Some members may want a roommate for accountability and to share hotel room expenses. Others may need a room to themselves for solitude and privacy for talking with a sponsor or making or receiving support calls. Some need to surround themselves with people of the same gender, while others of us feel safer in mixed-gender situations. We each may have our own unique set of needs. It is our responsibility to discover these needs and ask for help in getting them met.

We cannot recover alone! SAA retreats and conventions can provide opportunities to step a little outside our comfort zones and grow in recovery, and there are ways to do so safely, with the help and support of others in recovery.

In Service,
Grace

The Women's Outreach Committee cannot guarantee that this advice will be equally applicable to every woman, although it is our hope that such will be the case.

Get in touch with Grace at *grace@saa-women.org* if you have a question you'd like answered.

The Greatest Thief

BY VINCE

Have you ever had something stolen from you? Your car, wallet, purse, jewelry, or something valuable? If so, then you know the horrible feeling you get when something that belongs to you is taken. You feel wronged, violated, and victimized.

Thieves rob us of things that are important, valuable, and sometimes irreplaceable. Theft is an injustice which demands reparation and compensation. Too often, there is no justice or compensation, leaving us feeling empty-handed and indignant.

Addiction is the greatest thief of all. It is cunning, baffling, and powerful. The addiction keeps taking and taking, and it never stops. It is stealthy because the addicted victim is usually unaware that they are being robbed.

I believe that most addicts do not have the awareness to recognize that something very valuable is being stolen from them. I certainly didn't realize it. In my addiction, I was so preoccupied with my addictive sexual behaviors that I was totally oblivious to the many losses I had incurred. By the time I realized it, it was too late to recover what I had lost.

My addiction stole almost everything from me: time, money, friends, family, happiness, joy, compassion, empathy, and the ability to love. I didn't even realize what I was losing until it was too late. I was so deep in my addiction that I had stopped caring about anything or anyone.

The greatest loss was when I stopped caring about myself. I remember that moment vividly. It was in the middle of a very lonely night during January of 2016. I was awake with insomnia, and I said out loud to myself, "I'm done caring. I will no longer care about myself or anyone else."

That was the moment my addiction took hold of me fully with a vice-like grip. I began to act out frequently in new and more radical ways, always seeking out more intense forms of sexual pleasure regardless of the consequences, whether I got arrested, sick, injured, or died. My sexual appetite was insatiable and I could never get enough. For the next two years and two months, I acted out almost continuously on a daily basis.

On my D-day of March 8, 2018, it all came to an abrupt end. That was the day that my wife confronted me after discovering the worst of my acting out behaviors. That was the first day that I got honest and admitted I had a serious problem with sex addiction.

In my addiction, I had lost myself completely, and I didn't even care. It was a heavy price to pay. But I am fortunate because I got the help I needed. Within a week of discovery, I found a therapist who confirmed I was a sex addict, and he insisted that I start attending SAA meetings immediately.

On Saturday morning of March 31, 2018, I attended my first SAA telemeeting, and I have never stopped. What did stop — gradually, just one day at a time — was my acting out behaviors. I eventually worked the Twelve Steps of SAA. I continued in therapy for more than four and a half years, at first weekly, and then monthly. That therapy was expensive, but it was the best investment I've ever made in myself.

Today, I am still an addict. But my mind is no longer insane or constantly obsessed with compulsive sexual behavior. Recovery has restored me to sanity and given me the gifts of awareness and clarity of mind. I am no longer a slave to my addiction, and I have regained the power to choose.

Over the years I've worked the Twelve Steps three times, and I have sponsored and helped many sponsees work through the Steps. Being of service to others has helped me in countless ways — not just to stay sober, but it has made me less selfish and much more selfless, compassionate, and empathetic towards others.

It may seem contradictory, but I am grateful for my addiction. Of course, I regret all the harm I caused to myself and my loved ones during my years in addiction. But because of my addiction and my recovery from it, I have learned, grown, and become a better person.

I am now a much better father to my two daughters, and a much better husband to my wife. Much to my surprise, my wife and I are still together and married — though I know that could change if I am not diligent in continuing to work my recovery.

My addiction may have robbed me of many things, but my recovery has rewarded me with amazing gifts that help guide me in all aspects of life.

Without my addiction, I would not have discovered SAA, and I would not have learned all of the spiritual principles that are embodied within the Twelve Steps of SAA. In the Green Book, Step Twelve states that, "As we progress through the program, establishing conscious contact with the God of our understanding, we become aware of these principles within us — like gifts that were always there, unopened until we were ready to receive them."

My addiction may have robbed me of many things, but in sharp contrast, my recovery has rewarded me with these amazing spiritual principles which are gifts that help guide me in all aspects of life: honesty, willingness, courage, humility, forgiveness, responsibility, gratitude, and faith.

Without these principles to guide me, I'd most likely be lost in my addiction, still spiraling out of control, all alone, robbed and never knowing myself.

With the spiritual principles, I've come to know and accept my true self as well as others. Because I have learned to love again, both myself and others, I feel like I am the richest man on earth, and I no longer have to fear the greatest thief within. What more could I possibly wish for? ◎

Silhouettes of God

You are the tinge of the sky right at dusk
You are the wind that I feel on my face
You are the silhouettes of the trees in the sky.

You are the dark that brings forth the light
And the light that ends the darkness.

You are the shine of the moon on my face
You are the moon as it shines in the sky.

You are love.

You are the first star to wake up at night
And the last star to go to bed in the morning
You are the promise of spring and the briskness of fall
You are the joy of a companion
And the death of a friend.

You are good.

You are here.

You are here.

I am here because you are here.

You are in the silence
And you are in the screaming.

You are the silhouettes of the trees as they dance across the sky.

You are the wonder of existence
And the reason why we wonder why we exist.

You are the silhouettes as they dance through the sky.

The Split-Second Rule

BY RICHARD C.

Early in recovery I learned about the three-second rule: If I see someone I'm tempted to objectify, I'm to turn away within three seconds. My addict saw a loophole. I could take in the view for a full three seconds, secretly leering at the person, then indulging in an afterglow of fantasy once I'd stopped looking. The image was in my brain, and I continued to exploit the person for my own gratification. My addict also had an expansive view of how long three seconds were – I could stretch time like a slow-motion movie, counting … o – n – e ... t – w – o … t – h – r – e – e ... violating the laws of physics as well as the clear intent of the three-second rule.

This was all part of my pattern of chronic relapse. Finally, when I admitted that fact to myself and disclosed it to my sponsor, he suggested that for me, three seconds was much too long. I also disclosed it to a dear friend who'd been sober in AA for decades; he recognized that my abuse of the three-second rule was like "sniffing the cork" for an alcoholic. Non-alcoholics can do that, but for an alcoholic, taking a whiff can lead to disastrous consequences. For me as a sex addict, that lingering look was putting my addict in charge, and the consequences could be equally devastating.

I may not have been acting out overtly, but I was certainly abusing these people with my eyes and my mind, each time giving myself a little rush of dopamine. I came to understand that I was indeed acting out, and that this behavior belonged in my inner circle. I'm not "normal." I've realized that I can't simply look wherever, and at whomever, I want.

Hence, the *split-second rule*. When I see someone that I might be tempted to ogle, whether it's in person or in an image, I am training myself to look away immediately and focus my attention on something else. I'm getting better at it, and it's becoming more and more automatic. When I realize that my addict has taken over — even for a few seconds — and I'm looking too long or dwelling on an image in my mind after I look away, I consciously turn my will over to my Higher Power. I say, "God bless you. I hope your life is good," acknowledging the person's humanity and wishing them well.

Of course, I live in the real world, and it has real people in it. It goes without saying that to interact with people, I often have to look at them. But every day, my split-second rule and my Higher Power are helping me honor the priceless humanity I see in others. If I sense at all that quick rush of dopamine that means my addict is trying to take charge, the split-second rule helps me get back on track.

This is only one tool, but it has helped me. Practicing the split-second rule, even imperfectly, helps keep me sober. And sobriety is priceless. ◎

Don't miss a meeting

Try the all-new "Find a Meeting" page on the SAA website: *https://saa-meetings.org*.

Search by location, day, meeting type, focus, and more. We'll see you in the rooms!

Some concepts in our program of recovery can be daunting.

Here are two stories that provide practical tools that give clarity.

Three Circles Insights

BY ANONYMOUS

When I first came into recovery, I was lost. I knew something was wrong — I just couldn't figure out what it was. When I came into the rooms, as I listened to people's stories, their words resonated with me. At the time, I didn't know what it all meant, but at a core level, it made sense. I had found home.

I learned the lingo, the tools, the fellowship. I found a sponsor and started working the Steps. One of the tools in our program — a precious gift of SAA — is the "Three Circles."

My relationship with the Three Circles has shifted over time. Initially, it was necessary to establish boundaries that clearly defined the behaviors I needed to abstain from. As I moved further into recovery, I discovered more subtle layers within the middle and outer circles, as each began to expand and deepen. I noticed how my Three Circles plan wasn't something one-and-done, it was a dynamic document that grew and changed as I did. Lately, I've come to see each circle as a realm of characteristics — not just a checklist of "shoulds," but a living expression of who I am in recovery.

Like many, I've come to appreciate the wisdom of the Three Circles in our program. I started with the inner circle, defining my sobriety and identifying the behaviors from which I agreed to abstain. I learned not to touch the very things that burn me. Simple. It's where I needed to begin. I also learned to be honest, to inventory and disclose the same behaviors that caused harm and pain.

As I progressed, I came to understand the wisdom of the middle circle: the gray areas where I identified indicators and access behaviors. With the help of a sponsor, I identified behaviors that, although not overtly acting out, led me down

a slippery slope. These are the places where I'd go on autopilot and eventually cross into the inner circle, losing my sobriety.

I also identified warning signs — states and situations that suggest I might be drifting toward unhealthy behavior and need to make a course correction. For me, this includes ruminating in feeling states such as resentment or entitlement. I can guarantee where those states lead!

For each of these middle-circle items, I've put action steps in place. For example, if I am feeling resentful or entitled, that's a cue to take an inventory and reach out to someone in the program. Some steps can be taken in advance, such as bookending situations I know might be triggering. If I find myself visiting an area where I used to act out, that's a sign to "tell on myself" and get honest with my sponsor. The point is: I'm always building my awareness and taking counteractions for anything listed in the middle circle.

Time and again, I've heard the recovery advice to "live in the outer circle." And I say a resounding "Yes!" As time has gone on, I've gained greater appreciation, insight, and gratitude for the wisdom of the outer circle. I've discovered that it, too, contains layers, indicators, and leading behaviors — only these point me in the positive direction, toward wholeness, and further into the outer circle.

It's been said that "connection is the opposite of addiction." Within the outer circle, I see activities that reconnect me with life: with myself, with others, and with the God of my understanding. I see these as layers within the outer circle, and I need to examine each of them to find fulfilling practices that support all three relationships.

Like the middle circle, the outer circle also provides a different kind of indicator. This one helps me answer a different question: "Am I truly living in recovery, or am I just getting by?" I call these indicators "evidence of recovery." There are also leading behaviors — actions that strengthen my connection and well-being, pulling me deeper into spiritual growth and service. Sometimes items are both.

Connection is one of the topics in my outer circle. The evidence of recovery shows up in how I connect with myself, others, and my Higher Power.

Reconnecting with myself might be as simple as giving myself the gift of rest and sleep. I now prefer to disconnect electronics and create a sacred space where I can truly rest and feel restored. Self-care also includes reconnecting with what brings joy: time in nature, gardening, or simply playing with my dogs.

Fellowship is a powerful way to connect with others. I'm learning to experience emotional, mental, spiritual, and even physical intimacy in ways that are fulfilling and meaningful. I reach out not just because "it's good for me," but

because I genuinely care about others and appreciate the shared connection we have.

A leading behavior is anything that pulls me further into the outer circle. The more I spend time with others in the program, the more I want to create those bonds and connections. The more time I spend with my Higher Power, the more eager I am to pursue that relationship. I continue to enrich it through reflection, gratitude, and prayer.

My prayers are no longer for outcomes or circumstances, but for guidance, patience, and healing. I pray that my heart cracks wide open, so I can feel empathy for those I've harmed — and for those still struggling. I pray to say "Yes!" to life, and to accept life on life's terms.

When I think of evidence of recovery, some particular examples come to mind:

- My life is filled with gratitude, and I express it with others.
- I am thinking less of "I should" and more of "I want to."
- I am touched emotionally and cry regularly, especially when journaling, writing reflections, or sharing from the heart.
- I am eager to be of service to others — not because it pleases anyone or makes me look good, but because it feels meaningful.
- I prioritize personal growth and self-care.
- I value connection and my relationships.
- I express boundaries that are respectful, kind, and aligned with my values.

When I've looked for a sponsor, I've sought someone who embodies the characteristics I aspire to develop. I have been and continue to be inspired by those who embrace the outer circle. I love when we can share experience, strength, and hope about our circle plans to help each other move forward in recovery.

When I am fully living in the realm of my outer circle, that is when evidence of recovery becomes visible. As our Eleventh Tradition reminds us, our goal is to encourage attraction rather than promotion. My outer circle helps make my recovery visible, and it inspires others.

To me, these are the signs that I'm living in the outer circle. Of course, there are times I may dip back into my middle circle — but the tools to return are already there. The more I do these outer-circle activities, the more I want to keep doing them. That's what makes them leading behaviors.

It's a magnet that draws me forward — into a life I love. ◎

Intimacy Avoidance Workshop

BY FRANK T.

On Saturday, September 9, SAA members in the Bay Area gathered for an experimental one-hour online workshop on intimacy avoidance. The session invited participants to reflect quietly in the chat and then share aloud, creating a safe space to explore how the Twelve Steps can apply to this often-overlooked aspect of recovery.

Defining Intimacy in SAA

The group began with a shared definition:

Intimacy is a close, familiar, and affectionate personal relationship with oneself, others, or a Higher Power. It involves being vulnerable and sharing deeply, allowing others to see one's innermost self. Intimacy may include emotional, physical, intellectual, experiential, and spiritual connection. While it can involve sex, it is broader and distinct from sexual activity.

From there, participants offered personal perspectives on intimacy: intimacy means and feels like honesty, openness, curiosity, trust, vulnerability, presence, and participation. For many, it meant connection without sex, or simply "being seen and seeing others."

Applying the Steps

The workshop then turned to Steps One through Six to consider how they intersect with intimacy avoidance.

> **Step One – Powerlessness**
>
> Intimacy avoidance often begins with fear: isolation, disconnection, secrecy, fantasy, shutting down, or compulsively making excuses to avoid vulnerability. Members spoke of living "in their head too much," hiding behind criticism or pretense, and mistaking sexual intensity for intimacy. This shared compulsion rules us.

Step Two – Insanity

Here, members reflected on the paradox of wanting closeness while actively pushing it away. The "insanity" was described as overanalyzing relationships, avoiding acceptance, repeating old patterns, or clinging to illusions of control. One participant summarized: "I really want to be close to the people I'm pushing away."

Step Three – Surrender

Turning to a Higher Power emerged as essential. Members spoke of asking their Higher Power to help with fear, acceptance, and gentleness toward themselves. Letting go of results, shaking off self-reliance, and trusting the process of connection opened the door to new possibilities.

Step Four – Inventory

Self-examination revealed how avoidance harms both self and others. Participants saw patterns of emotional unavailability, blame, low self-esteem, and self-neglect. For some, past trauma and shame fueled protective barriers. Assets also surfaced, such as willingness, honesty, and intentional listening.

Step Five – Sharing

Speaking aloud to another person was described as a powerful antidote to avoidance. Members emphasized how this effort engendered participation, connection, relief, and trust: being accepted without judgment, releasing shame, and practicing honesty in our community.

Step Six – Readiness

Finally, participants discussed becoming ready to let go of intimacy avoidance. Readiness meant vulnerability, risk, and acceptance of imperfection. It involved trusting our Higher Power, being willing to make mistakes, and embracing "progress, not perfection." Some noted the importance of fun, playfulness, and courage to face seemingly painful — yet ultimately inconsequential — ego bruises along the way.

Workshop Reflections

In the final minutes, participants reflected on what worked and what could improve in future workshops. Quiet, written reflections followed by verbal sharing created safety and depth. Real-life examples resonated strongly, helping members feel less alone. Crosstalk, when constructive, was also seen as valuable.

For the future, members suggested clarifying format expectations (chat, crosstalk, and sharing guidelines) and encouraging more specific examples. Some also hoped this workshop format of engagement and shared learning could be incorporated into retreats, conventions, and conferences. The next scheduled workshop is "Forgiveness and the Steps."

Closing Thoughts

This workshop highlighted how understanding intimacy avoidance — though less frequently discussed — can be central to recovery. Exploring it through the Steps offered members new insights, a sense of shared struggle, and hope for deeper connections. As one participant summed up: "We don't have to be good at this. It's new. Progress, not perfection." ◎

DEAR WILL

Should I continue coming to meetings?

What can meetings do for program veterans?

Dear Will,

I haven't acted out in over a year. Do I still need to attend meetings?

Signed,
Over It

Dear Over It:

That's great that you haven't acted out in over a year! It's important to consider every day of abstinence as a gift from a Higher Power.

Meetings are an important part of recovery in SAA. For many of us, meetings may be the first time we discover that we are not alone. Meetings may be the first time we start to realize that there is a solution, the first time that we feel hope.

In a meeting, we can talk openly about our addiction, receive understanding from others, and begin to feel some sense of relief. As we listen to other people share, we can identify with their experience and learn from their strength. Attending meetings helps us move "away from isolation into fellowship, and ultimately into recovery" (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 10).

Even though those benefits of meetings are mostly thought to apply to our early days and months in recovery, these aspects of meetings are also important as we progress in recovery. In our future recovery, there are likely to be times when we need to be reminded of the hope that we have in this program, or times when we need to hear the wisdom shared by another member.

In your question, you do not mention where you are in the process of working the Twelve Steps with your sponsor. It is important that we define our "recovery" more in terms of what we are doing, rather than what we are feeling or in the

fact that we haven't acted out in a while. It is important to continue the progress of taking these Twelve Steps, and to have a daily focus on the step-work that is necessary for that day. For example, if you are on Step Nine, continue working through your amends list. If you have taken all twelve steps, continue taking Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve daily. But the important thing for us is to continue in the SAA program every day – wherever we are in that process.

That focus on step-work actually points to the highest need for us to continue to attend meetings even though we may not have acted out in a while: Step Twelve service.

Initially, in our recovery journey in the SAA program, we desperately need to receive that which a meeting can provide. However, the main reason that we should continue to attend meetings as we progress in recovery and experience positive results – even after we have experienced spiritual transformation – is because meetings provide us with opportunities to carry the SAA message to others who need to hear it. That is the ultimate reason why you – and we all – should continue to attend meetings: for opportunities to carry the message to other addicts who are still suffering.

In Service,
Will

Do you have a question for Will?
Please email Men4SAA@saa-recovery.org.

Writing to Inmates

BY DAVID S.

I have been a member of SAA for ten years and an inmate correspondent for two. Writing to inmates is one of the most rewarding forms of service work I do. The lifeblood of recovery is carrying the message to the addict who still suffers.

I have corresponded with four inmates. Each one has a different story and different actions for which they are paying their price. I have written to one inmate who did not identify as a sex addict. His incarceration was the result of drugs and a relationship that ended violently.

Each of these correspondents was prompted by the authorities to contact SAA. Most were seeking parole. One inmate attends an SAA meeting in his facility. When I write to them, I remember that my main goal is to keep the message simple and clear, not to get too personal, and to do my best to outline what Twelve-Step recovery has to offer.

I call myself a correspondent instead of a sponsor. After all, a sponsor is someone who guides a fellow through the Twelve Steps. Because of their environment, most inmates cannot write a thorough and fearless moral inventory without possibly doing themselves harm. A person needs to be in a safe, secure place before attempting to put pen to paper.

Each of my correspondences lasted a few months. The ISO office sent them each a mini Green Book. From what I've seen, one of the biggest obstacles for inmates is access to postage stamps. After all, these are men with limited resources. The ISO tells me that it's for the best to not send them stamps or money. Beyond regulations related to sending things of value into a penitentiary, I also remember that if an addict is looking for help from another individual, it can cloud his vision of his Higher Power.

I use the ISO office in Houston as my return address. The office receives my letters and forwards them to me via email. I prefer this method of communication, because this way there are people who check the letters going to and from the facility. It's another way to make sure no shortcuts are being made that could lead to confusion.

I take this service work seriously. I am grateful for the opportunity to help others. I offer what help I can, and I leave the rest to God.

Editor's note: The author's service is greatly appreciated; however, the ISO Prisoner Outreach program encourages members who write to prisoners to sponsor them and not simply serve as pen pals. The purpose is to carry the SAA message, and the experience of members who have corresponded with multiple inmates over many years suggests that this is best done as a sponsor. We are careful, however, to caution the prisoner not to write anything that might be self-incriminating.

Letter from Prison

BY TIMOTHY G.

I am seventy years old. I have had problems with addiction to alcohol, drugs, and sex. Previously, I attended the AA program dealing with my addictions to alcohol and drugs, and I have been clean from those problems for over 30 years.

In my sexual addiction, I was in denial. I thought I was a monster. At one point, an individual asked me to visit an SAA meeting. I figured I didn't have anything to lose. Within an hour, I knew I was in the right place.

The denial disappeared from me that day. This SAA group has not been formed that long, only three years. I have been a member of the group for half of its existence. That ends my history lesson. I'm going to jump into the meat and potatoes of our program.

I believe we need a support group for everyone to help stay abstinent. I believe practice makes perfect. With support, you can do almost anything. When I get out of prison, I have a plan to start an SAA group in my hometown. The nearest meeting is about 125 miles away and I don't have a driver's license or a car.

I plan on getting a part time job to keep myself busy — no idle time. Idle time is wasted time. I have learned through our meetings that idle time is a danger to our sobriety. I am learning how to keep my life balanced mentally, spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

I started working on this when I came into the correctional system. I knew my way wasn't working for me. I needed to learn different ways — changing my thinking and my feelings, and not acting out without thinking about consequences. Of course, I failed once in a while. I am not perfect.

I started slowly with my physical health, jogging every other day. I also read my Bible, worked Bible studies when offered, and went to church. I signed up for college for an Associates Degree, and I work in a self-help group as a facilitator. When I started all this, everything fell in place for my life. I knew it was on the right path.

In the future, I would like to work on my relationship with my family to show them I have changed from the person I was before I came to prison. I can now recognize my triggers and can reflect my thoughts and actions to a positive outcome, avoiding idle time. I plan to sign up with my old hobbies — bowling and shooting bow and arrows in competition — and to keep on jogging to compete in the 5K race in my hometown held once a year. I may compete in other road races.

I enjoy helping people and will volunteer in our Community Center, encouraging people to do the right thing to stay out of jail or prison. I will share my story with them and look for a church that teaches the Bible. I will stay away from negative people and hang around good people. I plan to join the VFW for more support from my brothers and sisters. I believe God will place individuals in my life to encourage me to stay on the right path.

Pathway to Recovery

BY MICHAEL C.

Recovery is a welcome rest from the distress that addiction had on my spirit, mind, and body.

When I was in active sexual addiction, the only thing I focused on was my ability to deceive and sneak my way in and out of people's lives without being exposed. That power was often short-lived, as I began to see how disgusting I was.

Through working the SAA program of recovery, I discovered first I had to take an honest evaluation of how bad I was. I had to learn not to scramble to hide my feelings with sexually acting out or with some fantasy. I discovered that I could just relax and surrender that pain.

Then I was no longer insane, doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. I found that the hole of disgust got bigger and bigger, just as my sexual acting out and deviance became intensified and out of my control.

I found I regained power the more transparent I became, as long as I wasn't glamorizing my story or peacocking my sexually acting out. I had to look at it with the disgust it deserved. I was treating myself and those around me very badly.

As I reminded myself, that's how I was then and how I am now, I realized that I could choose to give my power away or take it back. Webster's dictionary defines recovery as the power to regain something.

Now, of course, I realize that transparency and disclosure are not going to be as exciting and emotionally charged as when I was in active addiction. Now it's more about a welcome rest from the distress that active addiction had on my spirit, mind, and body.

In conclusion, I remind myself that I am a fallible but worthwhile person. I deserve self-respect and the respect of others. Today, I will treat myself as a worthy deserving person.

FROM THE BOARD

Looking to the Future

BY JIM L.

ISO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We value your input. Email the board at board@saa-recovery.org

As the end of the ISO fiscal year rapidly approaches, the ISO executive director and the Finance and Operations Internal Standing Committee of the Board of Trustees are busily working on the 2026 budget. Based on historical data and carefully crafted projections, the budget essentially outlines a plan for the coming year.

The plan includes support for the continuation of services provided this past year, as well as a vision for what new services might be added in the new year. The Board will consider the budget at the December meeting.

As a reminder, the ISO provides services in seven broad categories:

- Communications – telephone, email, videoconference
- Publications – books, booklets, pamphlets, audio recordings, newsletters
- Document sharing and repository
- Websites – SAA outreach, service, store, Conference, convention
- Outreach support – men, women, LGBT, Prisoner, PI-CPC
- Financial management
- Meeting management – Conference and convention

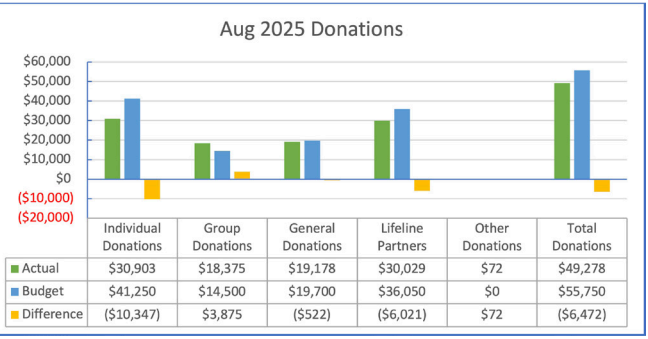
To support these services, the office maintains a significant IT infrastructure, including a database that, among other uses, feeds the new meeting search function on the SAA website.

Other plans for the next two years include the redesign of the service website and the ISO store. All of these projects are planned to support members and groups in carrying the SAA message of recovery and are predicated on the generous contributions of SAA members, groups, and intergroups.

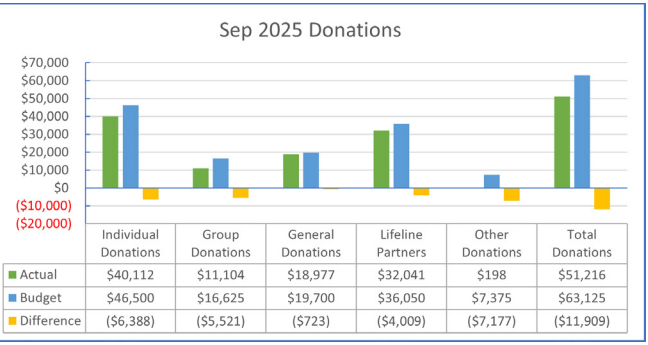
Plans are already well underway for the 2026 annual meeting of the ISO Conference and the SAA international convention. For location and date information, contact the ISO, or watch your email.

If you have questions about the ISO or the Board of Trustees, feel free to email the office at *info@saa-recovery.org*.

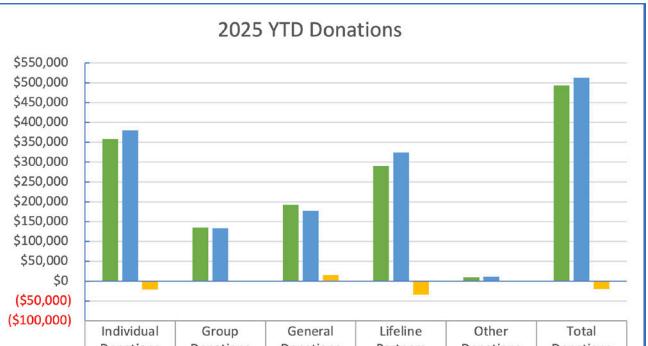
FINANCIAL SUMMARY



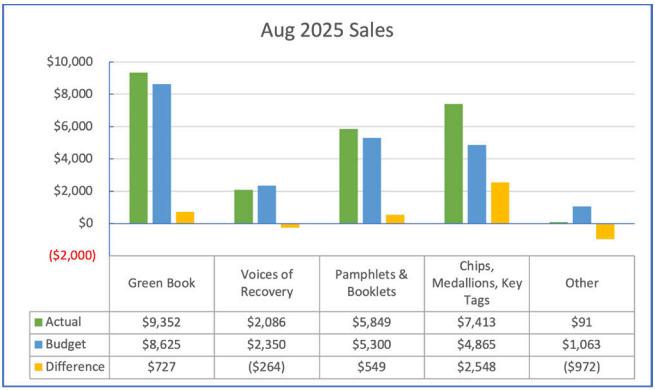
	Individual Donations	Group Donations	General Donations	Lifeline Partners	Other Donations	Total Donations
Actual	$30,903	$18,375	$19,178	$30,029	$72	$49,278
Budget	$41,250	$14,500	$19,700	$36,050	$0	$55,750
Difference	($10,347)	$3,875	($522)	($6,021)	$72	($6,472)



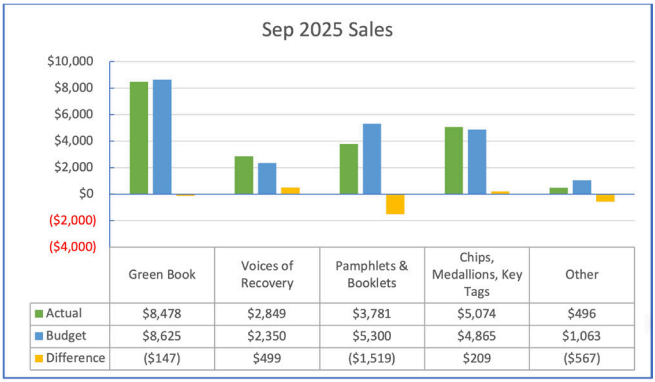
	Individual Donations	Group Donations	General Donations	Lifeline Partners	Other Donations	Total Donations
Actual	$40,112	$11,104	$18,977	$32,041	$198	$51,216
Budget	$46,500	$16,625	$19,700	$36,050	$7,375	$63,125
Difference	($6,388)	($5,521)	($723)	($4,009)	($7,177)	($11,909)



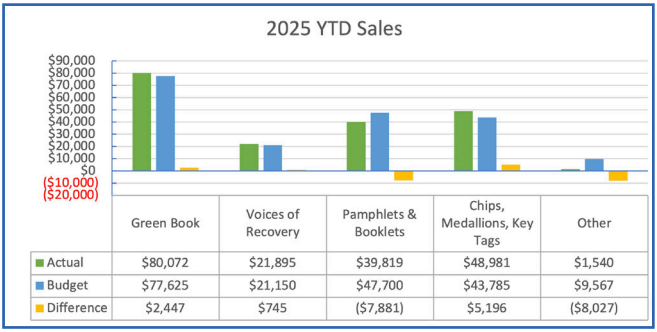
	Individual Donations	Group Donations	General Donations	Lifeline Partners	Other Donations	Total Donations
Actual	$358,457	$134,656	$192,654	$290,333	$10,127	$493,113
Budget	$379,500	$133,625	$177,300	$324,450	$11,375	$513,125
Difference	($21,043)	$1,031	$15,354	($34,117)	($1,248)	($20,012)



	Green Book	Voices of Recovery	Pamphlets & Booklets	Chips, Medallions, Key Tags	Other
Actual	$9,352	$2,086	$5,849	$7,413	$91
Budget	$8,625	$2,350	$5,300	$4,865	$1,063
Difference	$727	($264)	$549	$2,548	($972)

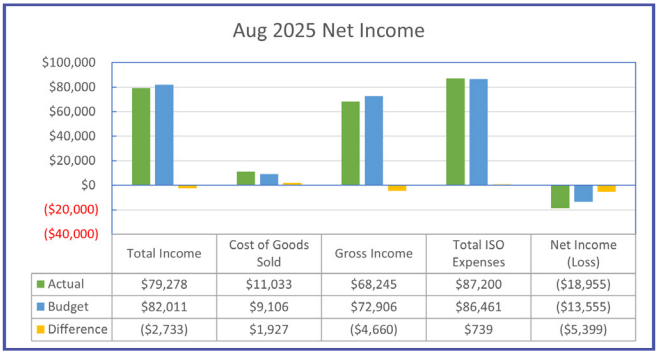


	Green Book	Voices of Recovery	Pamphlets & Booklets	Chips, Medallions, Key Tags	Other
Actual	$8,478	$2,849	$3,781	$5,074	$496
Budget	$8,625	$2,350	$5,300	$4,865	$1,063
Difference	($147)	$499	($1,519)	$209	($567)

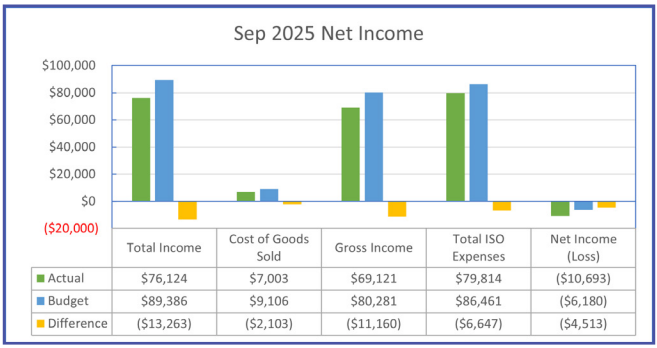


	Green Book	Voices of Recovery	Pamphlets & Booklets	Chips, Medallions, Key Tags	Other
Actual	$80,072	$21,895	$39,819	$48,981	$1,540
Budget	$77,625	$21,150	$47,700	$43,785	$9,567
Difference	$2,447	$745	($7,881)	$5,196	($8,027)

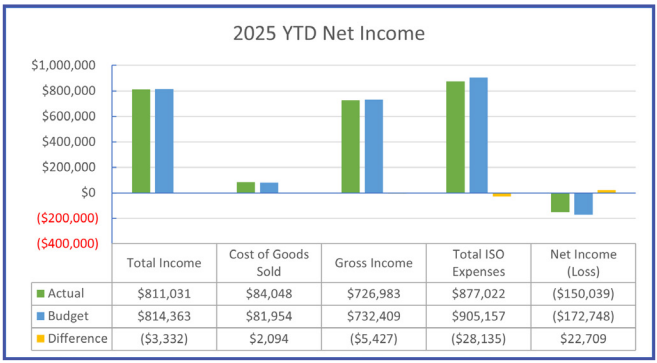
FINANCIAL SUMMARY



	Total Income	Cost of Goods Sold	Gross Income	Total ISO Expenses	Net Income (Loss)
Actual	$79,278	$11,033	$68,245	$87,200	($18,955)
Budget	$82,011	$9,106	$72,906	$86,461	($13,555)
Difference	($2,733)	$1,927	($4,660)	$739	($5,399)



	Total Income	Cost of Goods Sold	Gross Income	Total ISO Expenses	Net Income (Loss)
Actual	$76,124	$7,003	$69,121	$79,814	($10,693)
Budget	$89,386	$9,106	$80,281	$86,461	($6,180)
Difference	($13,263)	($2,103)	($11,160)	($6,647)	($4,513)



	Total Income	Cost of Goods Sold	Gross Income	Total ISO Expenses	Net Income (Loss)
Actual	$811,031	$84,048	$726,983	$877,022	($150,039)
Budget	$814,363	$81,954	$732,409	$905,157	($172,748)
Difference	($3,332)	$2,094	($5,427)	($28,135)	$22,709

Donations are declining. Total Donations are 96% of the year-to-date budget. LifeLine Donations have been significantly below budget this year.

Sales fell below budget in September due to a sharp decline in pamphlet sales. Year-to-date sales are at 96% of the budget.

2025 Expenses are below budget by $28,135, largely due to the office being short-staffed, a situation that will be corrected as the office hires additional staff.

The reduced expenses are offsetting the reduced income, so our net income is running above budget.

Thank you all for your generous support!

Tracy R.,
Executive Director

Your help is needed!

The ISO maintains an active outreach program for sex addicts who are incarcerated.

Would you like to learn how you can help be of service to this population? Learn more about qualifications for this program at *https://saa-recovery.org/diversity/prisoners/*

CONTACT THE ISO

Office

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Information Technician and Prison Outreach Manager: Jonathan C
Administrative Assistant: Jerry B

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

Karen S (chair); Bill I (vice chair); BJ M; Bob H; Brian S (treasurer); Enan S; Jim L (secretary); Juan V; Lizz O; Michelle P; Tom B; Tim A

Board: *board@saa-recovery.org*
CSC: *csc@saa-recovery.org*

Literature Committee

Alex B (TOC editor); Andrew H; Arnie A; David C; Himanshu B (secretary); Jeff B; Jenny M; Keith G; Mike K; Ron R; Ruth (chair); Zach R (vice chair).

LitCom: *litcom@saa-recovery.org*

Calendar

The most up-to-date 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. Don't worry if you're not a writer. Tell us your story and we'll do the rest. If we have any questions, we'll contact you.

There are three ways to submit your story.

- First, you can submit online at *saa-recovery.org/toc*. This is the easiest for most people.
- Second, email *toc@saa-recovery.org*. If possible, include a copy of the release form below.
- Third, mail your submission, with the release form, to ISO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

Requested deadlines and suggested topics are below. Email *toc@saa-recovery.org* if you have any questions.

Issue	Deadline	Topic
» Jan/Feb 2026	» December 1	» Guardrails
» Mar/Apr	» February 1	» Fellowship
» May/June	» April 1	» Gratitude
» July/August	» June 1	» Rigorous Honesty

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 AND TWELVE TRADITIONS

The Twelve Steps of SAA

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.

The Twelve Traditions of SAA

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SAA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers.
6. An SAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sex Addicts Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SAA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sex Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SAA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.