

THE OUTER CIRCLE

The Tenth Step

- * A spot-check inventory

PLUS

- * Parsing Step Two
- * The Second Tradition
- * Challenges and hope facing an incarcerated sex addict





International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

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The Outer Circle Mission

The mission of *The Outer Circle* is to provide information from the ISO and to share the experience, strength, and hope members have obtained from working the SAA program of recovery. As the first iteration put it in 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.

May - June 2021

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FROM THE EDITOR

All voices are welcome and desired in *The Outer Circle*

BY CHRISTIE K.

I implore all those with broader, more diverse experiences to please submit articles, editorial comments, or suggestions.

World-wide, the human race is beginning to awaken from its one-size-fits-all mentality and learning to embrace a wider spectrum of individuality including, but not limited to, various ethnicities, gender identities, and sexual orientations. Some might be more hesitant than others to accept all forms of diversity, but with persistence, understanding, and the continued presence of non-conforming members, it is possible for everyone in SAA to be celebrated for the awesome, worthwhile, unique human beings we are.

In the article I wrote for the March issue, “Shame to Grace,” it was my attempt to encourage all members of SAA to become more involved in promoting inclusivity within our program. As many meetings are still predominantly composed of heterosexual, cisgender, white men, expanding the inclusivity of the program, in my perspective, needs to be an intentional pursuit, the valuing of all people by all people. Less judgment and objectification and more vulnerability and honest connection are key principles in recovery regardless of individual differences.

I apologize if my message was not received as it was intended. In spite of my diversity and cultural training, my personal experience is still that of a heterosexual, cisgender, white woman. Therefore, I implore all those with broader, more diverse experiences to please submit articles, editorial comments, or suggestions to the editor of *The Outer Circle* at toc@saa-recovery.org

Thank you so much for your participation in the SAA program of recovery and for reading this month's issue of *The Outer Circle*. I hope you are blessed by reading the experience, strength, and hope of your fellows. I appreciate everyone's patience, with me and with the program, as this gradual change of recovery unfolds. And, I applaud everyone's efforts to be a part of the solution.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Convention, Conference, and Service

BY PAUL M.

**It is time for the
area assemblies
to elect their
delegate for
the 2021-2022
service year.**

Convention time is upon us and it is looking like this should be a great year. This will be the first time we have held a virtual convention and the committee is working hard to make it enjoyable by all. I really must thank the Ohio Valley fellowship for sticking with this through the canceling of the face-to-face last year and a virtual convention this year. The members have really stepped up to make this a great event and the virtual connection via Zoom will allow members from all over the world to attend. Even if your time zone does not align with US – Central time, all the workshops and speakers will be recorded, and those recordings will be able to be streamed during the convention for free with a convention registration of only \$25 USD. Just go to saa-convention.org for more info. If you need to learn the username and password, call the ISO office.

It is also time for the area assemblies to start electing their delegate for the 2021-2022 service year to come to the ISO conference in October. The business motions are due to the ISO office no later than June 30th. As they are reviewed by the Conference Planning Committee, they will be posted on the service website, saa-iso.org. It is suggested that the 2020- 2021 delegate maintain that position for two years or the alternate delegate could take on the role as the delegate this year. The vision is to have continuity between conferences.

If you would like to work more on your Twelfth Step and volunteer for a service position in the ISO committees, please fill out a service résumé at <https://saa-recovery.org/saa-service-resume/>. ISO committee service is a great way to give back and I have found that it has strengthened my recovery by giving back and getting connected to others in service.

DEAR GRACE

Importance of a Variety of Meetings

BY WOMEN'S
OUTREACH COMMITTEE

**Attending
a variety of
meeting types
could broaden
and deepen the
level of recovery
available to all
sex addicts.**

Dear Grace,

I keep hearing that it would be good for me to attend an all-women's meeting. It seems to be expected, but frankly, I don't see why. I'm much more comfortable with men. Women scare me. Is it necessary for me to go to an all-women's meeting?

Scared of Women

Hi, Scared of Women:

That's a good question and one we hear fairly often. The short answer is no, you don't have to go to any specific kind of meeting. SAA has a variety of meetings for a simple reason: addicts are individuals with varying needs and comfort levels. All genders are represented within the fellowship of SAA, and some members may feel uncomfortable being in exclusively same-sex meetings, for a variety of reasons. "No single type of meeting can meet the needs of every sex addict. Some addicts will be more receptive to certain kinds of meetings than others" (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 83).

However, it might also be worth exploring your reactions, because they may provide insights that will be useful in your step work and recovery. In Step Four, in particular, we explore our resentments, fears, and harms. Some of us examined experiences of mistrust and competition whenever we were around other women. We found that we were frightened of being judged by other women, even more than by men. We realized that we had objectified and harmed women (other women and ourselves).



Here is one woman's story of how she grew, as the result of receiving support from other women as part of her recovery:

So, it was important for me to see other people as just people. I was able to value them and see them as a role model even when they were struggling too. I needed to learn to value myself. It was a way of nurturing myself while nurturing others. It is a way to look at myself in the mirror. I did not feel like my acting out

*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.*

aligned with what I hear other women share about. However, in spite of that, I needed to see my similarities. I needed to find a new way to relate to people and myself.

This last point is critical: in recovery we are not just stopping addictive sexual behavior; we are changing our way of life. "If we can honestly face our problems, and are willing to change, The Twelve Steps of SAA will lead to an awakening that allows us to live a new way of life according to spiritual principles" (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 20).

Attending a variety of meeting types could broaden and deepen the level of recovery available to all sex addicts. We hope you will take the opportunity to explore what works for you!

Grace



BY MILTON G.

Came to Believe

I came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. From Webster's Dictionary's definition of sanity: "The condition of being physically and mentally free from bondage of disease." I believe Step Two is the foundation of faith and hope.

I came to believe: All I had to do was believe and have faith: a little confidence and trust in others to help me fight my addiction.

That a power: There has to be something out there that will help me arrest my addictions, some form of "help" that will bring order to a chaotic way of life.

Greater than myself: This power has to come from somewhere other than my own "will power." That obviously didn't work, failing me at the most crucial time. My best efforts to address my addiction weren't strong enough to kill it off. I had so many opportunities I didn't take advantage of due to my selfishness. I let them slip away.

Could restore me: My Higher Power could restore me to the life I was living prior to my addiction removing my power to choose, a time when I was still able to use the morals and principles that were instilled in me by my parents and family. Today, what I've gone through has become what I needed to go through in order to get to where I am today.

To sanity: I now have the freedom to be able to choose how to live. Now: living to live – not: living to abuse drugs and relationships. Being restored to sanity has taken years of hard work. I'm now able to see the world clearly. All I had to do was change my attitude and behaviors.

“Insanity” was what I allowed to control me: covetousness, fornication, desire, drugs, money, passion, power, and being a sex worker.

For twenty-two years, during the early stages of my life, I was completely out of control. My insanity was rooted in thinking the drug use, excessive drinking, and sex were the normal way to live. I kept taking dangerous risks as if I were destined to die...until I found God, the SAA program, and my sponsors. Today, I ask, “If I'm going to be saved, who is it that will save me from my destructive behavior?” And the answer is making an outreach call and relying on a Power greater than myself.

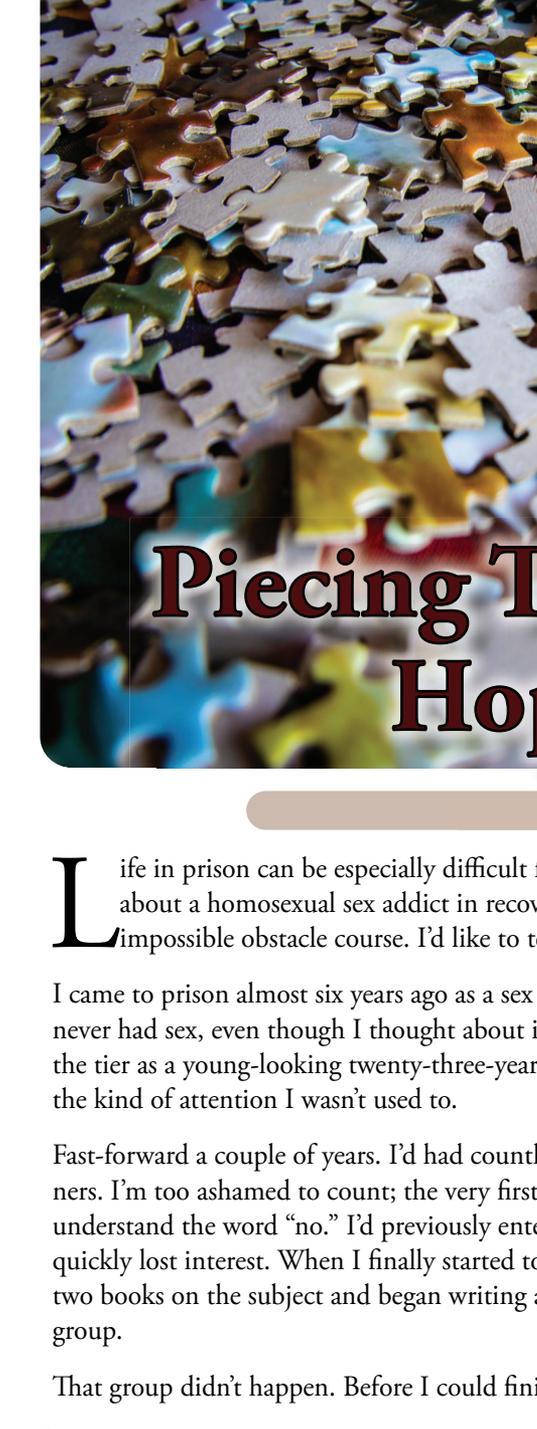
Through working with my spiritual advisor, among others, I came to believe that my life had become unmanageable and that I was powerless to change my foolish, pathetic behavior. Because of my ego, my frustration grew. I justified my actions, whether they were right or wrong. There were times when I got sick of using drugs, but my ego, that justifying voice in my head, kept leading me back to using. Even a near-death experience didn't stop me. Only by admitting to my addictions, seeking help from a Higher Power, and practicing the steps daily, did I come to realize there is a better way to live and new conquests to explore.

When I stopped using, after lifelong substance abuse, I got mad. It required a combination of therapy, sponsorship, self-help, anger management, and especially Sex Addicts Anonymous meetings, as well as daily contact with my Higher Power that allowed me to clean up and begin to enjoy a sober life.

I constantly remind myself that, if I want my life to change, I have to change. Each positive change I make builds my self-esteem. I realize that I am different. I'm acting differently, and I am strong enough now to face life on life's terms. ●

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 at info@saa-recovery.org. Please submit articles via email in Microsoft Word format with the **RELEASE FORM** that can be found, with additional guidelines, on page 31.



Piecing Together Hope

BY JOSH R.

Life in prison can be especially difficult for a sex addict. When you're talking about a homosexual sex addict in recovery, the path can seem more like an impossible obstacle course. I'd like to tell you about my journey so far.

I came to prison almost six years ago as a sex offender. Except for my crimes, I'd never had sex, even though I thought about it all the time. So, when I stepped onto the tier as a young-looking twenty-three-year-old, I was quickly overwhelmed with the kind of attention I wasn't used to.

Fast-forward a couple of years. I'd had countless encounters with a number of partners. I'm too ashamed to count; the very first one was with a cell-mate who didn't understand the word "no." I'd previously entertained the idea of sex addiction, but quickly lost interest. When I finally started to get serious, I checked out our library's two books on the subject and began writing a request to start a mental health group.

That group didn't happen. Before I could finish my proposal, I was moved from

protective custody and into general population. I found a boyfriend who I loved and felt healthy with. I wanted to marry him and be together forever. The problem? I was cheating on him from pretty much day one. In fact, I was cheating on him when the deputy warden walked in and my life exploded.

I got segregation time. I lost my kitchen job, and I was restricted from using the phone or purchasing commissary. Worse was the loss in trust from my friends and especially my boyfriend. There was an insane amount of judgment from the people around me as if I was now a totally different person. But I still considered myself incredibly lucky. My boyfriend chose to stay with me and to support my fight against my addiction. While in segregation, I'd recognized my rock bottom and actually spoke to the chaplain about helping me start a group. A good friend of mine, with his own addiction, was a big help and spoke to the chaplain as well.

Just because you decide to get help doesn't mean life gets easy. Within days of getting out of segregation, a fellow inmate went to staff and claimed that he saw my boyfriend and me making out. It was a lie, but they didn't ask before hauling me right back to segregation.

More segregation and more restrictions, which all lasted longer this time because it was a second offense. I got put on a housing unit for troublemakers, famous for being hostile to sex offenders. It's been over a year, and I'm still here.

However, I did get the group I was after. With the assistance of my cofounder and a supportive chaplain who really went to bat for us, my facility now has a successful SAA group. Every week more people show up than I ever would have expected. We share our stories and come together in a way that never would have happened otherwise. We started to heal.

I'm very thankful for this opportunity. The tools SAA provides are unmatched, and I can't say how much I appreciate the support they've provided to me and to every member of our group who has reached out. I pay a lot of attention to my circles and encourage others to do the same. My relationship ended on good terms. Love is hard when there is no trust. I'm trying my best to build myself back into a comfortable life, but it's hard. All I can do is keep trying, one day at a time.

HELP WANTED!

Letter writers/sponsors needed!

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*Great way to serve & carry the
SAA message of recovery to prisoners.*

Email: HarveyA@saa-iso.net

or call ISO at 713-869-4902

LIVING IN SOBRIETY

Amazed by Progress

BY JOSH P.

What helped me walk forward through the sandstorm of despair was the people who reached out to me.

Hi. My name is Josh, and I'm a recovering sex addict. My sobriety date is 6/27/2015, and my inner circle behaviors consist of porn, compulsive masturbation, going to any physical or virtual location with sexual intent, adult businesses, and paying for sex.

When I came into recovery, I didn't know what the purpose of outreach was. Like most of us, I was used to being alone and isolated in my addiction, and calling people to see how their day was going and vice-versa seemed foreign to me. So, when I met a fellow with more time in the program than me, and he told me he was on the phone at least five hundred minutes a month with program phone calls, I couldn't believe it. My bill had only maybe sixty minutes tops and that was for everything in my life. Same as with the text messages.

For my ten texts that month he had about a hundred. I just couldn't believe how active in the program this man was. He was like the polar opposite of me. As for my sobriety, it didn't start the day I joined the program. It took me awhile to find my sobriety in this program. I joined in October of 2013, but as a fellow member told me one night at fellowship, "Keep coming back till the magic happens."

To this day, I'm glad I did. It wasn't easy for me to get this far, nor has it been easy working the Steps. What happened for me that changed my life for the better was hitting rock bottom. What helped me walk forward through the sandstorm of despair was the fellowship and the people who reached out to me.

When I made my phone calls, I no longer held anything back. I was more honest with people about every aspect of my life. I talked about where

I was with my connection to my Higher Power, where I was with my step work, what it was like in my head, and any struggle I was going through.

For the first six months, I checked in with my sponsor if I had any suicidal thoughts. Whether it was 8 am or 10 pm, I would make phone calls, even late-night calls; although I would do my absolute best to go to bed by 10 pm. In my experience, not a lot of good things tend to happen after 10 pm for this recovering sex addict.

Eventually, there came a moment in my recovery where I was six months sober, still working on Step One for the fourth or fifth time, and my home group in San Jose had an open chair position for outreach. I didn't have much confidence in my recovery and was scared, but I felt my Higher Power wanted me to do this, even if I felt my personal message of recovery wasn't that strong yet. I could still help the addict who suffers inside and outside of these rooms.

So, I volunteered with just enough sobriety, picking up my six-month chip earlier that week, and I got voted in. Right away I got to work seeing what I could do to be of service to my home

If you have five or more years of sobriety and would like to write a Living in Sobriety column, please contact toc@saa-recovery.org.

group. I found out that a majority of our meetings weren't registered properly, and our mail from the ISO was going every which way. So, I updated everything and figured out that our nicely done site wasn't registered with the ISO yet either... so there was a lot of work that needed to be done. That same fellow from earlier and I were able to get everything straightened away.

Once that was done, next came the challenging part, and that was making a comprehensive outreach strategy, which was part of my chair position job at my home group. I looked into donating the Green Books to the local library (someone beat me to it), and I posted some flyers around other club houses about our meetings (wasn't that effective).

Then came the most important tasks my group really wanted. The desire for a newcomer packet in our meeting space to be given to every newcomer, and having our speakers' recordings go online for anyone to listen to for free. With the help of the chips and literature chair, we created a packet consisting of two pamphlets from the ISO and a meeting list card all attached together. Then came the tapes. During a talk about the tapes at a business meeting, at one point I got so upset that I almost gave up on the tapes all together.

So, I took a week off from being the outreach chair under sponsorship guidance. I was taking everything about the

I didn't have much confidence in my recovery and was scared, but I felt my Higher Power wanted me to do this, even if I felt my personal message of recovery wasn't that strong yet. I could still help the addict who suffers inside and outside of these rooms.

and every month we keep adding to it slowly. It took a while longer than I would've hoped, but through God's grace and a desire to help the addict who still suffers, we persevered, and our groups' dream of having tapes became a reality.

My life today is very different from the life I came into the fellowship with. I'm now one of "those guys" who have more than five hundred minutes a month with phone calls about recovery. I have a surplus of phone calls to return. I do my share of sponsorship, and recently, for the first time for me, I got to speak on a panel about the importance of daily connection, i.e. outreach. (The tape wasn't recorded properly unfortunately, but I just spoke for the third time at our potluck as I was asked to speak, being over three years sober now, about living life on life's terms.)

The very meetings I remember sitting in the audience wondering if I'll ever speak; wondering if my recovery will ever have a strong enough message just as when I started out as the outreach chair. Today I believe my message of recovery is strong. Recovery isn't just possible but probable. Just as it's no coincidence that earlier today in a "popsicle stick meeting" I attended I got the stick that asked me, "What has changed in my program?" So, I felt compelled to write about it.

When I came into the fellowship, I didn't know what it meant to care for another human being, only for myself. But thanks to the fellowship of SAA, and all those whom I've had the pleasure of walking this path with, my life changed for the better. I didn't understand many things, and there are still lessons for me to learn as I walk this spiritual path of recovery.

I've been sober now over five years, sober and finishing up Step Nine. I can attest to the phrase, "We will be amazed before we are halfway through" because I'm amazed of the changes that have occurred in my life thus far. ●

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project from the business meetings personally. Later, I realized that this was my defect of arrogance coming out. So, what happened to the tapes? Well, it took a while, a little over six months actually, to start getting them collected, edited, signed off, and reviewed by a subcommittee. We regularly have new tapes added thanks to the volunteers on this subcommittee.

At the time of writing this, we now have several speaker tapes available at our site SanJoseSAA.org* for free,



Tenth Step Inventory

A spot-check guide to the Tenth Step

BY FRANK T.

Seven years into SAA and it's great not to be alone. But there is something that keeps me in a separated existence more often than not. It is a pattern of taking things personally, being the victim, and feeling entitled. Yes, I am emotionally immature and need to grow up. How do I stop believing I'm the center of the universe? What lets me see and experience a better reality than the negative thoughts whirling in my head portray?

My wife is also in SAA. Early in our relationship, when I would complain, she would say, "Maybe you need to do a Tenth Step around that." It was frustrating. I didn't know what she meant, so I asked her – how do you do a Tenth Step around a problem? She walked me through a "Tenth Step Spot Check Inventory" using my current issue: SAA members not cleaning the coffee area after the meeting. I followed her lead.

Kick-off statement: I resent the people at the meeting not cleaning up the coffee area

(Step Four)

I feel frustrated, annoyed and angry.

It affects my personal relations (judging and thus separated from members) and my ambition (to have the area clean so the church knows we are respecting their facilities) and my pride (leaving areas better than I found them).

My part – self-centered fear (afraid we will lose our meeting room at the church; afraid my view on what's right to do will not be respected; afraid of having to clean up the area every day).

(Step Five)

I told her

(Step Six)

Was I entirely ready to give up this defect? (After a few moments considering “entirely ready,” I was)

(Step Seven)

We said a prayer together, asking a Power greater than me to help me change.

(Step Eight)

I didn’t need to make amends to the meeting members, but I did need to make an amends to myself.

(Step Nine)

I did make a living amends to myself for carrying this resentment around for months.

(Step Ten – the wrap up)

Visualizing how I would act in the future, forgiving myself for my part, and forgiving others their part from my perspective.

.....
Then a shift happened. I felt a few moments of serenity, a kind of freedom from the victimization and entitlement. I began practicing more frequently. I found every spot check inventory was an adventure in humility and freedom.

Every vulnerable amend triggered by a spot check inventory made it easier for the connection between me and my fellows to be revealed. Seeing my part and topping it off with forgiveness for myself and everyone involved was a new world.

No surprise – the addict in me, my ego and my instinct, is wholly uninterested in spot check inventories. Thank goodness the program provides a community around me for practicing or I would likely be lost.

This Tenth Step Spot Check Inventory is where I separate myself from a defect and reduce the power of that defect in the present. It helps me stay in the present because it means I make efforts to be aware of my actions on a regular basis one day at a time.

How do I know a spot check is needed? If I feel irritable, sad, tense, abandoned, or overwhelmed or if I’m blaming and complaining, I need a spot check.

I don’t always feel lighter after working the spot check inventory. I try to look for the next right action, to focus on the task at hand. I make a phone call to see how another is doing or engage in another behavior that shifts my focus away from whatever it was that got me bent out of shape.

I have found it useful to identify and make note of my typical resentments and fears as they occur. I have read that my Higher Power may not permanently take away my defects that I think I had done it myself. Some of my inventories have started with:

- I am afraid of losing my self-respect. (Without control people may not think well of me, and I need to fix that.)
- I am afraid of losing my relationship with my daughter. (My ex-to-be is

going to ruin everything.)

- I resent X for complaining about how long it took his Maserati to get serviced (You may have more money, but I am better than you because I don't drive a car that props up my imaginary picture of myself.)
- I resent Y for interrupting my quiet conversation with a newcomer. (I was saving them when you barged in.)
- I resent that guy in that car for cutting me off! (Doesn't he know who I am?)
- I resent Z for not getting back to me when she said she would. (And I thought she liked me!)

I sometimes do an advance spot check inventory when I know I am going into a situation that might evoke fear, such as a party where I feel as though everyone is looking at me and expecting me to say something intelligent and funny or THEY MIGHT ASK ME TO LEAVE! I try and visualize my Higher Power in the room in advance.

The purpose of a Tenth Step Spot Check Inventory is to practice the principles of SAA in all areas of my life, to forgive myself and others, to experience the power of my Higher Power, and to receive another chance to live in today. It is better to deal with a defect than to allow a defect to run the show.

Got a recurring or lingering resentment? Put it through the program! Try a spot check now. It works for me.

Ten minutes to a freer existence.

My version of the Tenth Step Spot Check Inventory process:

Step Ten: I resent (person, place, thing) for _____ (Note: can substitute for "resent." I am afraid of, was dishonest about, was selfish or self-centered about)

Step Four:

- *It made me feel* (examples: angry, fearful, annoyed, disappointed, envious, self-pity, disrespected, dismissed, out of control, unloved, sad, frustrated).
- *It affected my* (fear, self-esteem, security, sex relations, personal relations, pride, ambition).
- *My part in it* (dishonest, self-seeking/selfish, fear, resentment).

Step Five: Tell someone

Step Six: Are you entirely ready to have the defect removed? (If not, perhaps pause and think about the impact of the defect on your life. Ready now? If not, repeat. Some of us love our defects too much to let them go right away. Don't feel bad. You are not alone.)

Step Seven: Ask your Higher Power to remove the defect.

Step Eight: Is an amends necessary? Forgive.

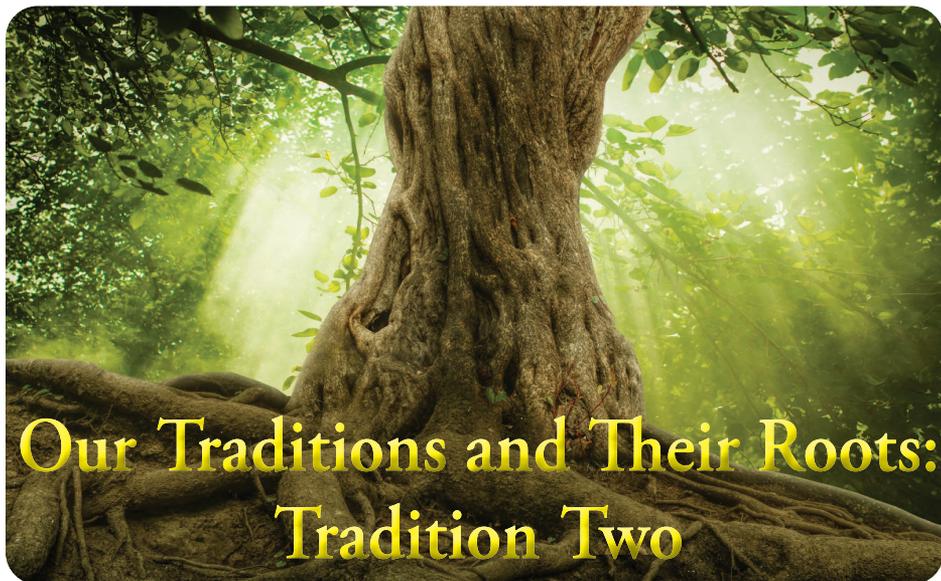
Step Nine: Make amends.

Step Ten:

Forgive the other and/or yourself – again.

Visualize how you might act differently next time.

BONUS: Say a "thank you" to your Higher Power. ●



Our Traditions and Their Roots: Tradition Two

“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.”

Editor’s Note: This is the third in the series which will look 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. The author of this article is not the same as the first two articles.

BY ANONYMOUS

In SAA meetings, there is typically one day per year, in February, when the Second Tradition is shared and elaborated upon. The corresponding section from the Green Book (*Sex Addicts Anonymously*, 79-81) is often read, and someone will talk about their appreciation for how every member, from the newcomer to the old-timer, has equal say in the how the meeting is run.

But what about the first sentence? There is “one ultimate authority.” To elucidate, let’s look to what we read in the foundational AA literature. In the appendix to the fourth edition of the Big Book it says, “no society of men and women ever had a more urgent need for continuous effectiveness and perma-

ment unity” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 561). The “ultimate authority” in our SAA meetings is an effective unity.

More clarity is provided in a vignette regarding “elder statesmen” and “bleeding deacons.” “The elder statesman is the one who sees the wisdom of the group’s decision” whereas the “bleeding deacon is one who is just as surely convinced that the group cannot get along without him” (*The Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions*, 135).”

When a person participates in birthing a meeting, it’s easy to become attached, wanting it to flow a particular way. However, new members join, new ideas are introduced, and changes need to be made to keep the meeting vibrant and healthy. No one person gets to claim ownership of a meeting, nor do they get to have a stronger voice at the table.

The Second Tradition builds upon the First as it is the common welfare of the meeting that establishes and maintains the unity of the group. Personal recovery depends upon the willingness of the meetings’ members to follow the guidance of the group conscience.

According to wisdom contained within the Green Book, the Second Tradition ensures that meetings remain focused on discovering and implementing decisions that are reached by seeking the common welfare and by asking, “What is right?” instead of “Who is right?” (*Sex Ad-*

dicts Anonymous, 79). Sometimes, the group conscience is readily evident. Other times, several hours can be spent in heated discussion before the group conscience can be reached.

“Group conscience is not the same as unanimity, consensus, majority vote, or compromise...it is the will of our Higher Power as expressed through the group” (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, 80). How do members of a Sex Addicts Anonymous meeting distinguish the “will of our Higher Power” when each member is free to decide their own definition of what “Higher Power” means to them?

Again, the group reflects back to the First Tradition to answer this question. “Our common welfare should come first” (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, 78). Whatever is ultimately going to be the best course of action to ensure the unity of the group will eventually come to the surface if the individuals involved are committed to seeking the common welfare of the group over and above their own personal agenda.

Once the First Tradition is established, the Second Tradition is able to flow unhindered. Those who step up to fill service positions can be trusted to care more about the good of the group than their own imperfections or personal qualifications. The good of the group is put first, and every member of the group shows up in service to their fellows and to the group as a whole.

Next issue: Tradition Three. ●

DEAR WILL

Beginning at the Beginning

BY WILL

Step One is the starting point for all addicts in recovery.

Dear Will...

I am relatively new in SAA. I have attended a few meetings over the past three or four weeks. I am convinced I am a sex addict, and I like what I am hearing in the meetings; but, I feel stuck, not knowing what to do next. I seem to be afraid to get started. What advice would you give for someone in my situation?

Signed,

Stuck and frustrated

Dear Stuck,

Fear is a natural reaction to unfamiliar surroundings, but it will fade, especially if you are attending healthy meetings and if you get a sponsor to help you get started working the steps.

Your frustration is a good sign because it means that at some level you recognize, or are beginning to recognize, that you are powerless over your addictive behavior. Recognition and acceptance of our powerlessness over our addiction is essentially Step One. It is the starting point for all addicts in recovery.

Forming connections in a healthy meeting will help ease your fear as well. In a healthy meeting, clear recovery solutions are discussed – how working the Twelve Steps of SAA allows us to break through the anger, resentments, and fears that underlie our addictive behavior. Only in this type of environment will you hear about the successes of those who have achieved sobriety, and there you will find genuine hope.

Also, for someone just getting started, there seems to be four cornerstones on which successful recovery must be built—a firm foundation



for long-term success in the SAA program.

The first is honesty. Being honest with at least one other person (usually your sponsor) and with oneself is essential for forward progress. Any program built on lies will eventually come crashing down.

The second is willingness. We have to break through our naturally stubborn will, the mandate to get what we want when we want it. We must be willing to surrender our lives into the care of a power greater than ourselves. Experience clearly shows that our own will power is insufficient to solve this problem.

The third is commitment. We may be willing, but if we do not make a resolute commitment, our program of recovery will stall. The impetus for such a commitment often stems from seeing and hearing the stories of others within the recovery fellowship, illustrating that the program

*If you have a question for Will,
please send an email to
Men4SAA@saa-recovery.org.*

does work.

The final cornerstone is action. The Twelve Steps describe actions we should take to achieve recovery. Without action, nothing happens—and frustration increases. Taking action is where the “work” of recovery is found. We work the steps, and we receive the gift of recovery as the result.

There are more details about each step in *Sex Addicts Anonymous* (the Green Book), which all members of SAA are encouraged to read—especially the first one hundred pages. In the meantime, get a sponsor, get honest, and become willing to do whatever it takes to recover. Make a firm commitment to work the program, and your fear will gradually diminish. In recovery, we get unstuck by taking the next right action one day at a time.

Will

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.”

STORIES OF SERVICE

Service takes many forms

BY CHRISTIE K.

Service can be painful, but it's also a privilege with myriad rewards.

We, in SAA, are all trusted servants. Everyone in this program who shows up at a meeting is a trusted servant. Showing up and listening to the shares of others is doing service. Filling a voluntary position at a meeting is doing service. Participating in your group's business meetings is doing service. And, there are also many service positions behind the scenes, beyond the level of individual meetings, where service is needed in order to ensure the smooth, continuous functioning of the program.

I'm not perfect either. Being a trusted servant doesn't mean never making mistakes. I made several mistakes in my transition taking over as the editor of *The Outer Circle*. I stepped on toes. I overstepped by responsibilities. I gave misinformation (in the article updating the "Minor Miracles" article, I said youth ages 13-17 could join the SAATM Zoom meeting nationwide instead of from anywhere on the planet). We all have our blind spots. The trick is to admit our weaknesses and to ask for help as needed. Ouch!

Service can be a painful process. I recently spoke with a fellow member who told me that service sets all of her character defects of fire. I get it. Serving others in humility and love is a tough job. However, it's also a privilege with myriad rewards. We get out of ourselves and get to be a blessing to someone else.

In my experience, being a part of the growth I see taking place in the lives of others in recovery is unparalleled. I usually can't see my own subtle progress, but I can see progress in my fellows. So, to everyone participating in service, regardless of the level of your commitment, thank you for being a part of the SAA program and keep coming back.

FROM THE BOARD

Growing Pains

BY DAVID H.
BOARD MEMBER

**At the 2019
Conference,
delegates
voted to shift
to an area-style
representation.**

I am a sophomore Board member for the International Service Organization. There is no greater honor for me than to serve our fellowship and its development. I have the advantage of having a sponsor who was involved from nearly the very beginning of our fellowship. He was a part of our service structure as well. The archival information told to me in story form is incredibly interesting.

Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) has grown rapidly over the past forty-four-plus years. The need for a service structure was realized early on in its nascence. In the first thirty years the ISO Board of Trustees was solely responsible for the management of the operation, business, and development of SAA as a whole. The annual business meetings were held with concerned members looking to develop a means to support the needs of the groups. Communication between the central office and the groups was vital. The struggle to keep our growth going was supported by some of our members who had experience in AA's General Service Organization and other Twelve Step programs as well. A yearly conference was agreed upon and a charter was put into place to specify the delegation of authority between the Board of Trustees, the Literature Committee, and the Conference. Regions of the fellowship were parceled and delegates from each meeting throughout the world would be sent to the conference to vote as the groups requested and to act as a liaison to the groups to keep them informed of all actions taken at the conference. This regional style of representation worked very well for the fellowship when there were as little as one hundred meetings.

FROM THE BOARD

Today, SAA has grown to nearly 2,000 groups worldwide with tens of thousands of fellows in our membership. The need for a change was realized. We had outgrown our own service structure and we were experiencing growing pains. It is not practical or financially prudent to expect that each of the nearly 2,000 groups would be able to afford to send a delegate to the yearly conference in Houston. At the 2019 Conference, it was voted that we would follow AA's model and shift to an area-style representation. This decision ended a ten-year effort to get conference approval for the change to an area-style representation model.

An area is responsible to elect a committee of officers and a delegate. The meetings in the area are encouraged to elect a GSR (Group Service Representative) and send them to the area meetings and assemblies. The GSRs convey the group conscience to the area delegate, who in turn carries it to the Conference. The delegate is instructed by the area as to how they will vote on motions from the floor. The delegate may do so, but can be swayed by opinions from other delegates, board members, or staff members. It truly is an informed group conscience. God's Spirit is felt with every motion championed and every voice at the microphone.

The area-style allows for a more effectual form of inner communication between office headquarters, the Board of Trustees, ISO committees and subcommittees, intergroups, areas, GSRs, groups, and each member of our fellowship. It allows for future growth and meets the needs of our fellowship today.

One thing to note is that the areas are entirely self-supporting as our 7th Tradition states. They are dependent upon donations from the groups in their area. Please remember to send in a portion of the collection to help with the development of committees and to send the delegate to the yearly conference.

I challenge each of us to get involved in service. It could be at your home-group, intergroup meetings, area meetings and assemblies, writing letters to inmates, ISO committees, board membership, outreach calls, attending a Zoom meeting (for now) or a face-to-face meeting (when they start up again).

I am responsible for when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help. I want the hand of SAA to be there, and for that: I AM RESPONSIBLE!!!

ISO NEWS

Don't mark ISO emails as spam!

If you receive emails from the ISO news list or one of the committee lists, don't mark it as spam! Telling your email provider that a message is spam can lead to others not getting their ISO emails, and may result in the ISO having emails blocked by other email providers. If you wish to unsubscribe from any email list, email info@saa-recovery.org.

Let's Talk Forums Time Change

The Let's Talk Forums hosted by the Conference Steering Committee will take place on the 4th Saturday of May, July, September, and November for 2021. Delegates and GSRs are encouraged to attend. For meeting access information, please contact the ISO at info@saa-recovery.org.

Conference Steering Committee Update

In its role of coordinating ISO Conference activities between annual meetings of the Conference, the CSC has increased its efforts to communicate effectively with area delegates and the Group Service Representatives (GSRs) that make up the area assemblies. The first edition of a new quarterly GSR newsletter was published in March and contains information of interest to GSRs throughout the fellowship.

“Let's Talk” forum sessions were held in January and March, and more are planned for May, July, and September. Invitations will be sent to all GSRs registered with the ISO. These videoconferences are designed to encourage two-way communication between GSRs from member groups and the ISO. Since the ISO mission is to support member groups in meeting their primary purpose, robust communication is essential.

In addition, a special training session is planned for July to encourage GSRs to participate in area assemblies and to bring the concerns of their respective groups to the ISO. As GSRs participate in these activities, they will become better acquainted with the internal workings of the ISO and the many opportunities for service at the international level.

Among subcommittee activities, the Charter and Bylaws Subcommittee is identifying the language in the charter that needs to be updated to conform to the new ISO area structure, which is now a reality. Hopefully, these essential changes can be proposed as amendments to the charter at the annual meeting of the Confer-

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ence in October.

In conjunction with the Board of Trustees and Literature Committee, the CSC, working primarily through its Concepts Subcommittee, continues two main thrusts: 1) to propose to the Conference a procedure by which core spiritual documents may be changed and 2) to solicit feedback on the currently proposed concepts for SAA service in anticipation of their eventual adoption in place of the AA Twelve Concepts for World Service.

As a reminder, any member of the fellowship may participate in CSC subcommittee meetings and projects. If interested, contact the ISO office at info@saa-recovery.org or call 713-869-4902.

Get Involved in ISO Service

Would you like to give back to our fellowship? International service is a great way to get involved in the fellowship and help reach suffering sex addicts worldwide. The Conference Nominating Committee is currently accepting service resume submissions to fill needed positions before the conference in October. If you are interested in serving on the Board, Literature Committee, Conference Steering Committee, Area Coordinating Committee, or the Conference Nominating Committee we encourage you to fill out a service resume today!

If you would like more information about the positions, you can find them on the service website www.saa-iso.org under the International Service tab. Please 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 resume in the past? We encourage you to fill out a new resume each year before June 30th 2021. All applicants will be entered into a raffle to win a free convention registration to the 2022 Convention.

The resume may be found on the service website at www.saa-iso.org under the “International Service” link in the left-hand menu or by clicking this direct link: <https://saa-iso.org/docs/SaaServiceResume.docx>

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

Author's Group Welcomes Members

Have you ever wanted to write something recovery-related but didn't know where

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to share it? Do you enjoy writing poetry, meditations, or other pieces of literature? If so, the Author's Group encourages you to join in our meetings and participate. We are looking for literature to discuss and collaborate on. One project that has recently been mentioned is a book of poetry and other literary items.

The Author's Group meets once a month for two hours on the first Saturday of the month. It is a Zoom meeting. We have lots of fun collaborating on different projects.

If any of this sounds of interest to you or you want to know more, please email info@saa-recovery.org and ask to be put on the Author's Group email listserv.

A convenient way to donate is here!

General Donation as an Individual

- In the U.S., text "SAA" to 91999. You will receive a responding text with a link to donate at a secure website. Alternately, you can donate at <http://igfn.us/form/GDovAg>.
- In Canada you can donate at <http://igfn.us/form/foGy5A>.
- Internationally you can donate at http://igfn.us/form/Q_2d_g.

General Donation as a Group

- In the U.S., text "SAAG" to 91999. You will receive a responding text with a link to donate at a secure website. Alternately, you can donate at <https://igfn.us/form/5Evk9Q>.
- In Canada you can donate at <https://igfn.us/form/Kub2RQ>.
- Internationally you can donate at <https://igfn.us/form/UINjyw>.

All URLs are case-sensitive.

Do you have information for the SAA history project?

Volunteers are gathering data for a history monograph, chronicling the beginning and growth of the SAA fellowship. Recently, they have made arrangements with the ISO office to record interviews with SAA fellowship members who have information about either the fellowship itself, the ISO, SAA literature or other aspects of our organization.

ISO NEWS

If you have information, insights, or historical perspectives on the early days or more recent expansion of SAA around the world, please let us know. Members wishing to volunteer for phone interviews (with possible follow-up questions) can send their contact information to the ISO executive director at director@saa-iso.net. All responses will remain confidential in accordance with SAA's Twelve Traditions.

Help us produce the most complete and accurate history possible!

Submit Your Event

Is your group, intergroup, or area hosting an event? Would you like it listed on our website? Submit your event at <https://saa-recovery.org/event-announcement-request/>.

Approved Board Actions

February

- Approved motion to reduce Operational Reserve from four months to three months of basic operational costs based on the current year's budget

March

- None

April

- Approved motion to transfer endowment fund assets to new management

Financial Report

Our total SAA Green Book sales were below our estimate of \$5,826 by \$1,128 in March. Our HCI sales (February's numbers, a month behind) were \$1,673 lower than budgeted. Findaway audio sales were \$58 above our budget of \$226. For the year we are 103.53% of our estimated sales.

Our book *Voices in Recovery* sales for March were \$561 below our budget of \$2,050 for March. HCI sales were \$501 below budget. For the year we are an average of 127.32% of our estimated sales.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales were above our estimate of \$1,000 by \$137 in March. For the year we are at 113.74% of our estimated sales.

ISO NEWS

Our plastic chips sales were below our estimate of \$405 by \$137 in March. For the year we are at 102.27% of our estimated sales.

Our bronze medallion sales were above our estimate of \$600 by \$140 in March. For the year we are at 123.40% of our estimated sales.

Our total sales for March were below our estimate of \$10,083 by \$1656 in March. For the year we are at 113.32% of our estimated sales.

Individual donations were above our estimate of \$40,466 by \$2,201 in March. For the year we are at 104.61% of our estimated individual donations. The general donations were below our budget by \$2,554 and the LifeLine Partners amount was \$1,344 above budget. Our March Lifelines budget is \$25,435 with an average over the year as \$26,000 (increasing each month to \$26,665 in December) and our goal is \$50,000 per month.

Group donations were below our estimate of \$11,338 by \$3,067 in March. For the year we are at 104.75% of our estimated group donations. Group LifeLine Partners are \$40.29 below above our budget of \$2,557 and general donations for groups was \$3,057 below our budgeted estimate.

Our total donations were \$896 below the budgeted amount of \$51,804. For the year we are at 104.75% of our estimated donations.

Our product inventory is valued at \$75,437.

Our operational reserve is fully funded at \$200,021. Our estimated three-month reserve is \$175,691.

Our total expenses were \$5,540 lower than our budget of \$69,724.

Our net income was \$3,532 above our budget of -\$11,330.

For March total income was \$61,269, our cost of goods was \$4,884, resulting in a gross profit of \$56,386. Our total expenses were \$64,184 resulting in a net income of -\$7,798, which was \$3,532 over budget.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,

Paul M.
Executive Director

CONTACT THE ISO

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The Outer Circle

Editor: Christie K.: toc@saa-recovery.org

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

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Maud D (Secretary); Mike K; Rachel R

Calendar - All times are CST. To attend a meeting email info@saa-recovery.org or call the ISO

First Sunday of the month

CSC: Policy & Procedure: 2:00 p.m.
Intergroup Communications: 3:00 p.m.

First Wednesday of the month

Prisoner Outreach: 7:00 p.m.

First Thursday of the month

CSC: Communications: 7:00 p.m.

First Friday of the month

CSC: Service Manual: 4:00 p.m.

First Saturday of the month

Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance: 9 a.m.
CSC: Twelve Concepts Work Group: 10:00 a.m.
CSC: Area Mentoring: 12:00 p.m.
Author's Group: 4:00 p.m.

Second Saturday of the month

Women's Outreach: 10 a.m.

Second Sunday of the month

Literature Committee: 4:00 p.m.

Second Thursday of the month

Seventh Tradition: 6:00 p.m.

Third Wednesday of the month

Area Coordinating Committee: 6:00 p.m.

Third Sunday of the month

Non-Religious Committee: 11:00 a.m.
ISOP Committee: 2:00 p.m.
LGBT Outreach: 3:00 p.m.

Fourth Thursday of the month

Public Information/Cooperation with the
Professional Community: 7:00 p.m.

Fourth Saturday of the month

Inclusion and Diversity: 10:00 a.m.
CSC: Charter & By-laws: 3:00 p.m.

Fourth Sunday of the month

Fellowship ISC: 1:00 p.m.
Conference Steering Committee: 2:00 p.m.

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.