



the Journal

Issue # 143

Single Issue \$4

How Do Newcomers Become Old-Timers?

Characteristics of Sex and Love Addiction

1. Having few healthy boundaries, we become sexually involved with and/or emotionally attached to people without knowing them.
2. Fearing abandonment and loneliness, we stay in and return to painful, destructive relationships, concealing our dependency needs from ourselves and others, growing more isolated and alienated from friends and loved ones, ourselves, and God.
3. Fearing emotional and/or sexual deprivation, we compulsively pursue and involve ourselves in one relationship after another, sometimes having more than one sexual or emotional liaison at a time.
4. We confuse love with neediness, physical and sexual attraction, pity and/or the need to rescue or be rescued.
5. We feel empty and incomplete when we are alone. Even though we fear intimacy and commitment, we continually search for relationships and sexual contacts.
6. We sexualize stress, guilt, loneliness, anger, shame, fear and envy. We use sex or emotional dependence as substitutes for nurturing care, and support.
7. We use sex and emotional involvement to manipulate and control others.
8. We become immobilized or seriously distracted by romantic or sexual obsessions or fantasies.
9. We avoid responsibility for ourselves by attaching ourselves to people who are emotionally unavailable.
10. We stay enslaved to emotional dependency, romantic intrigue, or compulsive sexual activities.
11. To avoid feeling vulnerable, we may retreat from all intimate involvement, mistaking sexual and emotional anorexia for recovery.
12. We assign magical qualities to others. We idealize and pursue them, then blame them for not fulfilling our fantasies and expectations.

© 1990 The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved

S.L.A.A. Signs of Recovery

1. We seek to develop a daily relationship with a Higher Power, knowing that we are not alone in our efforts to heal ourselves from our addiction.
2. We are willing to be vulnerable because the capacity to trust has been restored to us by our faith in a Higher Power.
3. We surrender, one day at a time, our whole life strategy of, and our obsession with the pursuit of romantic and sexual intrigue and emotional dependency.
4. We learn to avoid situations that may put us at risk physically, morally, psychologically or spiritually.
5. We learn to accept and love ourselves, to take responsibility for our own lives, and to take care of our own needs before involving ourselves with others.
6. We become willing to ask for help, allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and learning to trust and accept others.
7. We allow ourselves to work through the pain of our low self-esteem and our fears of abandonment and responsibility. We learn to feel comfortable in solitude.
8. We begin to accept our imperfections and mistakes as part of being human, healing our shame and perfectionism while working on our character defects.
9. We begin to substitute honesty for self-destructive ways of expressing emotions and feelings.
10. We become honest in expressing who we are, developing true intimacy in our relationships with ourselves and others.
11. We learn to value sex as a by-product of sharing, commitment, trust and cooperation in a partnership.
12. We are restored to sanity, on a daily basis, by participating in the process of recovery.

© 1990 The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Table of Contents

4 Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous Preamble

5 Letter From the Editor

4 The Twelve Steps

6 Question of the Day

Theme: How Do Newcomers Become Old-Timers?

8 Becoming a “Long-Timer”

10 Not Ready Yet

10 For As Many Reasons As There Are Stars In The Sky

13 They Need To Hit Rock Bottom

14 Painful Withdrawal Can Lead To A New Life

15 Hard Questions To Answer

16 Why I Keep Coming Back

17 The Paradoxical Characteristics

18 Service Work Helped Me Stay

20 Climbing Out Of The Pit Of Desperation

Share Space

23 Understanding Prayers Unanswered

24 Prayers Used for Step 11 Work

25 A December Harvest

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous Preamble

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition-oriented fellowship based on the model pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous.

The only qualification for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. S.L.A.A. is supported entirely through contributions of its membership, and is free to all who need it.

To counter the destructive consequences of sex and love addiction we draw on five major resources:

1. **Sobriety.** Our willingness to stop acting out in our own personal bottom-line addictive behavior on a daily basis.
2. **Sponsorship/Meetings.** Our capacity to reach out for the supportive fellowship within S.L.A.A.
3. **Steps.** Our practice of the Twelve Step program of recovery to achieve sexual and emotional sobriety.
4. **Service.** Our giving back to the S.L.A.A. community what we continue to freely receive.
5. **Spirituality.** Our developing a relationship with a Power greater than ourselves, which can guide and sustain us in recovery.

As a fellowship S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues and seeks no controversy. S.L.A.A. is not affiliated with any other organizations, movements, or causes, either religious or secular.

We are, however, united in a common focus: dealing with our addictive sexual and emotional behavior. We find a common denominator in our obsessive/compulsive patterns, which transcends any personal differences of sexual orientation or gender identity.

We need protect with special care the anonymity of every S.L.A.A. member. Additionally we try to avoid drawing undue attention to S.L.A.A. as a whole from the public media.

©1985, 2003, 2012 The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

The Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A.*

1. We admitted we were powerless over sex and love addiction - 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 a Power greater than ourselves, 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 sex and love addicts, and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives.

*©1985 The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The Twelve Steps are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that A.A. is affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only. Use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities, which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise. **THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS** 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — 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 Him. 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 Him 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 Him, praying only for knowledge of His 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 alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Letter From the Editor

Dear Reader:

I've heard old-timers say it many times in meetings: "If you decide not to stay, we'll be happy to refund your misery." I know it would be misery for me if I decided to leave S.L.A.A. I can't, God can.

Step Twelve says "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to sex and love addicts, and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives."

Sign of Recovery twelve is: "We are restored to sanity, on a daily basis, by participating in the process of recovery."

If we use the tools of recovery on a daily basis and continue to do all Twelve Steps (instead of "two-stepping"), we find that our lives get better and we have more peace and serenity than we had in the days of our addiction. We are promised that we learn to handle situations that used to baffle us. And even through troubled times, we can find strength in faith. That has proven to be true in my life. I got through surgery abstinent in S.L.A.A., and stayed abstinent from flour, sugar, cigarettes and alcohol. In the past, fear like that would have crushed me and I would need some kind of numbing out. The tools of recovery and conscious contact with a Higher Power can help us through any situation and can clear away character defects that have plagued us our whole lives. The gifts are there if we reach for them and tell our addict voice to "Just shut up, I'm doing this right now. It's the sober life for me!"

Lisa C., Managing Editor, *the Journal*

The Conference Journal Committee, a service body within Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, publishes *the Journal* for the good of the international S.L.A.A. membership. Oversight and policy is provided in accordance with the Ninth Tradition.

© July 2013. The Augustine Fellowship, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Stories, interviews, personal testimony, and other content contained herein are authored by members of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous. The opinions expressed in *the Journal* are not necessarily the opinions of The Augustine Fellowship, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc., F.W.S. office, Annual Business Conference or any other Conference committee including the Conference Journal Committee or *the Journal* production staff. Motions adopted at the 1989, 1990, and 1991 Conferences chartered *the Journal*, but it is impractical for all of the content of a periodical such as *the Journal* to be Conference-approved. Each recovery group can determine its own position on the use of content from *the Journal* at its meetings.

The Augustine Fellowship,
Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous,
Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc.
1550 NE Loop 410, Suite 118
San Antonio, TX 78209

1-210-828-7900 Tuesday-Friday 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT
except for holidays

(fax) 1-210-828-7922. www.slaafws.org

For subscription concerns, please visit: <http://www.slaafws.org/subscriptionhelp>

Managing Editor
Outreach Director
Art Director
Editorial Assistant
Proofreaders for this issue

Lisa C.
Stirling
Fiona
Tom B.
Rita H.
Jill W.

Question of the Day

& Answers from Yesterday

“WHY DO NEWCOMERS LEAVE S.L.A.A.?
HOW DO OLD-TIMERS STAY?”

They're not ready. They're not getting sponsors or aren't serious about finding sponsors/working program. Old-timers stay by working their program/making calls.

— **Samantha, Sherman Oaks, CA**

Newcomers leave if the pain of withdrawal overwhelms the desire to change. Long-timers stay because the painful reminders seen in newcomers is a rekindler of the desire not to go back.

— **Ray, Northridge, CA**

Some newcomers aren't really addicts.

— **Ramon, Los Angeles**

Some old-timers stay to work their 12th Step and share their experience, strength and hope with others. A percentage of newcomers leave because they haven't hit bottom yet.

— **Trudie**

Newcomers leave because their shame and pain are overwhelming. They are not ready for recovery. Old-timers stay to remain sober and because of gratitude.

— **Jim B., Dallas, TX**

Newcomers leave S.L.A.A. for multiple reasons: intimidated by the idea of changing everything, not feeling connected, but too scared to connect, not ready to stop acting out, or unable to stay sober. Old-timers stay because they are afraid of reverting back to old behaviors, they have found a community who can relate on multiple levels, or stay to carry the message to newcomers.

— **Rebecca K.P., Houston, TX**

I think newcomers leave S.L.A.A. because they are not totally convinced it is the right place for them. I stay because I know this is the *only* place for me.

— **Gordy B. in Dallas, TX**

Yes, this is a very tough one. I currently have 4 years and 6 months of back to back abstinence from my bottom lines and I am finding that one newcomer is so sick that it is very, very hard for me to stay in the same group.

— **Kristin**

The Question of the Day from the last issue was, “Why do newcomers leave S.L.A.A.? How do old-timers stay?” Here are some wonderful responses for your enjoyment. They are not presented in any particular order. The next two questions are: Issue #144 — Sex and Love Addiction: What is Real? — “How did you become aware that sex and love addiction was real?” The deadline for submissions is 7/15/13; and Issue #145 — Addiction in the Age of Technology — “How has technology affected your addict behaviors?” The deadline for submissions is 9/19/13. Please send answers to www.slaafws.org.

Early in my recovery, I went to a birthday night for a group of the original 12 Step fellowship. Someone celebrating 13 years said something that has stuck with me ever since. He said he had calculated that 13 years of sobriety was roughly 4,745 days. He said there was no way he could ever have stayed sober for 13 years, but that he could do it for one day — 4,745 days in a row. So, how do old-timers stay? One day at a time — 4,745 days in a row.

— Joy, Dallas, TX
760 days and counting

I know for myself (in/out many times), it’s because the members take themselves a little too seriously. Some meetings, however, are very lively. But, on the whole, I find a sense of humor lacking, which for me is essential to balance the suffering disease can cause.

— Adam, Los Angeles

As a relative old-timer (5-years) I stay because if I don’t, I know I will die. Also, my sponsor, 12-Step work, and service commitments keep me coming back even when I don’t “feel” like it.

— Jonathan, Los Angeles

I think some people aren’t ready, and other people become ready through defeat... The important thing is that I don’t judge either, because God’s path has it’s own design.

— Chris R., Los Angeles

I think the newcomers are afraid of facing these issues and the old-timers keep coming back.

— Robert, Los Angeles

I stay because the consistency, which is critical to my recovery, keeps me sober and increases my hope and willingness.

— Manuel, Los Angeles

When I first came in 2003, I was so disconnected with my own feelings and overwhelmed with the shares — and the intimacy in those shares — that a shell to protect myself formed immediately. It’s only my openness to crack that shell, along with fellows actually trying to reach out, that I feel more willing to stick it out and see what I can learn from others.

— Glenn S., Los Angeles

We join S.L.A.A. to focus on issues with sex and love, our ability to relate to others in a safe and sane way, but to work this program involves relating to others while we’re still developing the tools to do so. I’ve met several members who have stated that they cannot and will not work with a sponsor — they’re intimidated by such a relationship, it triggers the very wounds that created their addictive patterns. I do think most of us are relationally-challenged, so it can be difficult to surrender and claim our seat trusting that Higher Power has got our back.

— Tom B., Los Angeles

I think newcomers leave because they’re just not ready and it’s too painful. And the reality is, I don’t think they’re willing to stop acting out. I stuck around because I saw there’s no other way. Some stay to carry the message in gratitude for what they are given.

— Lili, Los Angeles

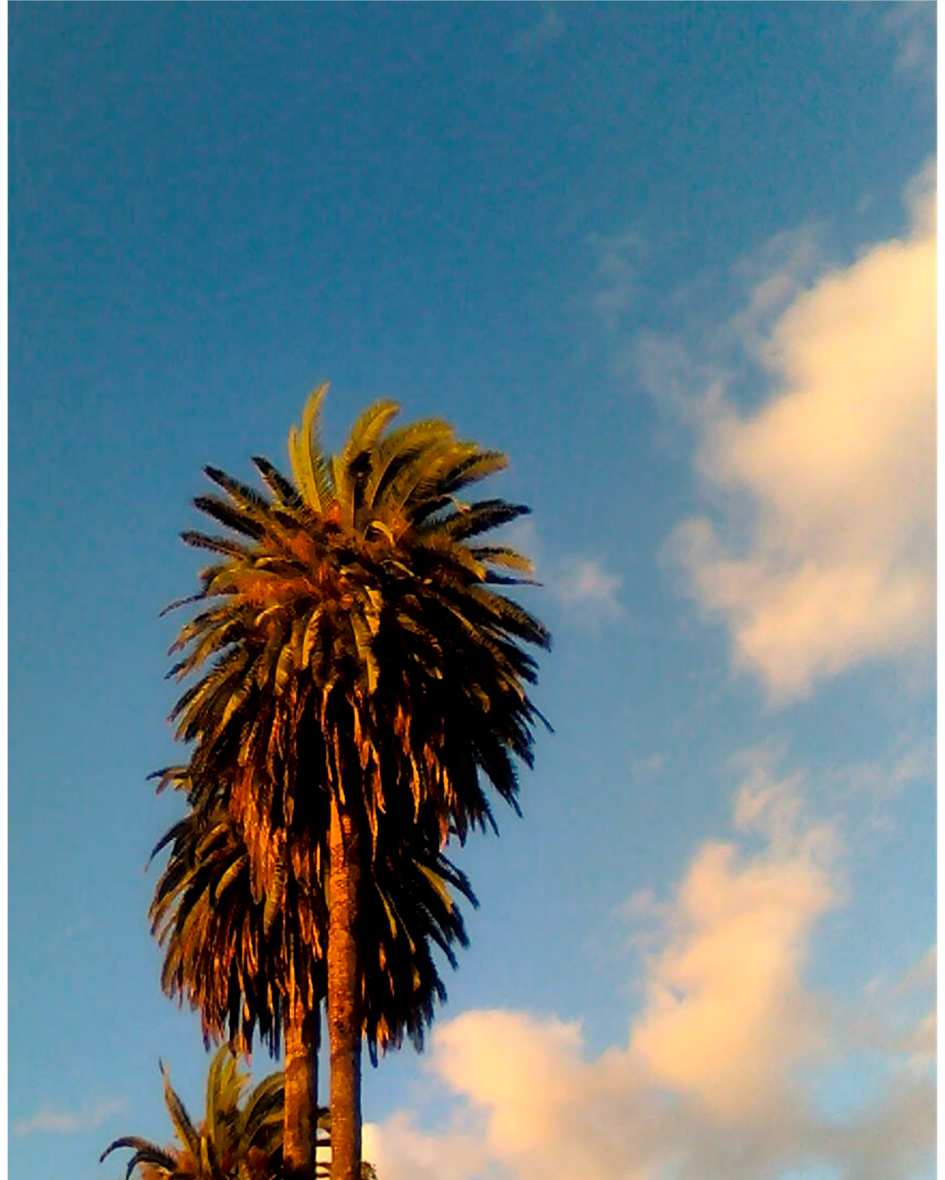
Becoming a “Long-Timer”

Thirty five years ago I was in withdrawal from my addiction to pornography and fantasy, promiscuous, often anonymous sex, compulsive attachment to relationships without genuine intimacy, and emotional anorexia with myself and others.

The first three yielded to simply not doing them one day, or one hour, or one minute at a time. And I learned to banish unwanted mental images and fantasies by substituting an image of the serenity prayer as it often was hung in A.A. meeting rooms. I would read it off slowly and silently to myself until the images and fantasies were replaced with a feeling of safety in partnership with my Higher Power, a.k.a. “God.”

Ten years later, I hit a hard bottom with a serious love addiction to a totally inappropriate partner. I started a new foundation for recovery — adding to my bottom lines the requirement to maintain a rigorous standard of honesty in all my relationships with people, substances, and activities. I abstained from any patterns of addictive returns, and maintained my honesty by staying current with the S.L.A.A. fellowship at regular meetings. I have lived by that one for approximately 8,900 twenty-four hour days, without breaking my original bottom lines for about 12, 330 days.

A few years ago, I participated with an informal invitation to S.L.A.A. members to respond to a simple questionnaire about



why they stayed and why they left S.L.A.A. Others and I summarized those results, about 120 -130 responses, in a series of 4 articles in the FWS Newsletter. Those results absolutely fit my own experience, so here is my

own, personal recipe for assembling one more day of sobriety!

1. Each day I live for this one day, and don't try to solve whatever life problems are bothering me all at once.

2. I do my best to walk each

day in each moment hand in hand with my Higher Power, in conscious awareness of my desire to put my own will in partnership with that Power, knowing from hard experience that things turn out better that way.

3. I have a plan for my day, my week, my month, and maybe in general for a year or so. I want to have a direction in life. At least one or two 12-Step meetings a week are a vital part of that plan. And one must be an S.L.A.A. meeting where I meet my commitment to stay current with present temptations to try and get payoffs that feed my addictive self rather than my recovering self

to make friends with humility – to see myself clearly and accept who I am right now, with all my talents and imperfections.

5. I try to do a couple of good things to help others each day, without trying to get credit for it. I cultivate gratitude.

6. I expect to make mistakes, and maybe make the same one more than once. But I try not to give up the rest of my sobriety while I learn to walk down a different street than the one where that particular kind of mistake lives.

7. I practice forgiveness toward myself and others, and leave judging up to a compassionate, all-knowing and always

discovered that my capacity for these things increases in every year that I continue to learn how to live a more sober life.

9. I try not to miss all the signs of a creative, loving God that surrounds me whenever I pay attention – the little flowering weeds that promise to take over the grass-killing concrete, the little bat fluttering around the street light to catch the bugs in the dark, the smile on the homely man's face as he asks his equally homely wife, "Ready to go, beautiful?" (honestly meaning what he says).

10. I go to Step meetings. I will never outgrow the need to learn from them and from the experience of others. If I get little or nothing from the meeting, I realize I have a responsibility to share my own experience right now in living sober, bad and good, in gratitude to all those who have shared with me their own experience, strength, and hope. I try to open my mind more for what I am supposed to hear, and say, and do for the meeting, according to God's will, not my own.

11. No matter what I do or don't do, no matter what others do or don't do, no matter how angry, resentful or judgmental I get at other people and S.L.A.A. in general sometimes, whether I think I need it or not; I... just... keep... coming... back.

12. I kept coming back. Meet 'cha later, everyone! We can all be long-timers, thank God!!!

— Anonymous

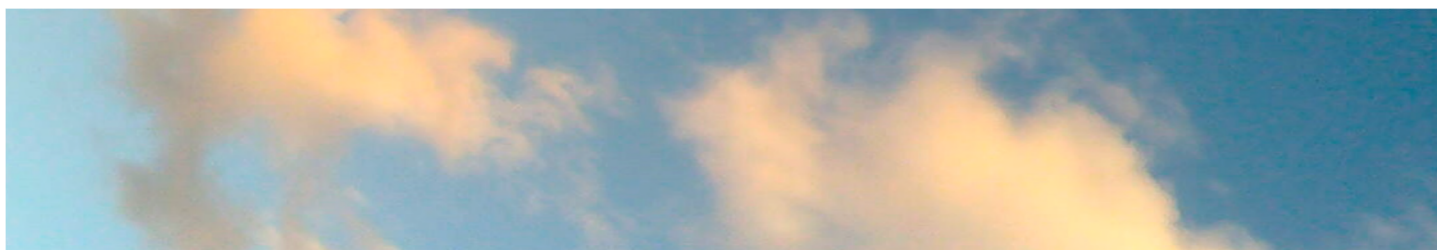
6. I expect to make mistakes, and maybe make the same one more than once. But I try not to give up the rest of my sobriety while I learn to walk down a different street than the one where that particular kind of mistake lives.

(temptations which have never stopped completely)!

4. I practice the 10th Step for each day, especially practicing alertness for areas of dishonesty, willfulness, and pride. I try

loving and understanding God.

8. I try to practice mindfulness, playfulness, self-nurturance, and joy, because I missed too much of that in my life before S.L.A.A. And I have



Not Ready Yet

I think there are a lot of reasons that newcomers leave. One of them is that they are not ready yet. It all happens in God's time, not mine. Another reason that newcomers leave is that they don't need this program. It isn't helpful for me to impose my will on anyone who enters. The truth is that people come to "check it out" to find out if they need it.

There are a lot of people who have sex and love "problems," and even really *bad* sex and love problems, but that aren't sex and love addicts. Addiction is a very particular thing, and the program is *very* difficult. My grand-sponsor always says, "there is no way I would do all this work if I didn't have to." It's good for me to remember. Generally, most people don't stay, do the work, and stick around forever unless it has undeniably

become a life and death situation.

When I hit my bottom and was calling suicide help lines for a month and hanging up on them in a rage, I knew something was deeply wrong. That "bottom" is what will keep me here. Remembering it and sharing my story with newcomers whose lives are on the line is what will keep me sober.

One final note, I think that many people who could use the program, who do belong, don't come back because no one in the meeting gives them a loving warm welcome. I like the A.A. spirit, the way A.A. members give each other rides and invite you out for food. When a new person who needs this program arrives at our doorstep, I believe that we old timers need to do the heavy lifting for them until they start to walk on their own.

As the saying goes, "let us love you until you can love yourself." I was told this by a sponsor when I started. Now my Higher Power is "the power of love" and I try to do the "will of love" whenever I see a new face at a meeting.

Love wants me to love this newcomer, to see past their crazy thinking and their angry resistant fear. I see the wounded child, the abandoned and scared little child that is underneath all the acting out for most of us. They just need love and to feel like they matter and are welcome and that they belong. They need to be given a hug and smile; encouragement and a compliment. They need us to love them. My job is to love myself enough that I can offer a loving spiritual fellowship to anyone who needs it.

— James, Los Angeles

For As Many Reasons As There Are Stars In The Sky

Why do newcomers leave S.L.A.A.? For as many reasons as there are stars in the sky. Because our lives are hectic and our thoughts muddled. Because the pain is not yet so excruciating that we are brought to our knees. Or

perhaps the pain is too shameful to sit with in front of strangers. Maybe someone accidentally looked at us from across the room in such a way that, in our highly sensitive state, made us feel unsafe.

Maybe we heard a story that

was too familiar, or too unfamiliar. We humans are such sensitive and fragile creatures at times that the slightest of breezes can sway our hearts one way or another, or blow us back out the door.

For me, coming into these

rooms for the first time just over two months ago, I stood on the edge of a precipice looking down into the abyss of my pain and I was overcome with vertigo.

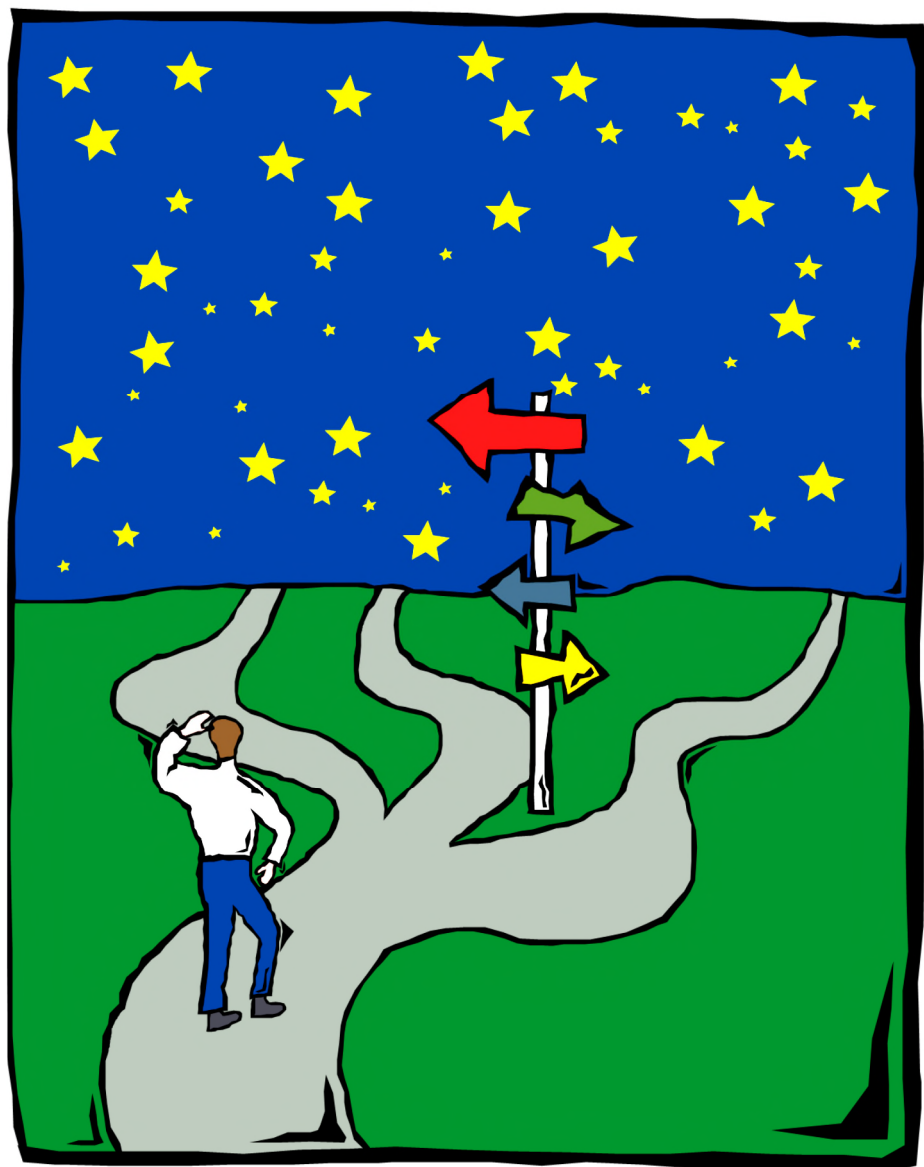
I felt dizzy and sick. My palms dampened with sweat and saliva filled my mouth. My heart beat like a prisoner trying to escape my chest and I wanted to run as far away as I could. But where would I run to? Retreat was no option — there lay only chaos and decay behind me, a life that no longer held any possibility of joy or peace.

I believe the fear I felt in those first meetings is shared by all of my S.L.A.A. fellows, in whatever form it manifests itself. And, of course, we would be afraid — we have spent our lives defending ourselves tooth and nail against pain, devising wildly complex and destructive methods of resistance, and here we find ourselves one day, walking into an unfamiliar room where pain is laid upon the table, festering wounds opened to the air and to the peering eyes of strangers.

God, what courage that takes, courage that we, as newcomers, do not yet know we possess. And most of us — certainly I — came into the rooms without a relationship with a Higher Power, and so where are we supposed to find that kind of courage?

I believe that we find it first in each other. We hear ourselves in other people's stories, in their pain, and hope, and recovery, in the quivering or self-assured voices of these strangers who speak so honestly from their hearts for three minutes.

We watch like children as the other strangers listen with attention and presence unusual to the outside world, nodding their heads or smiling in compassion. We notice the lack of judgment, even at the most



embarrassing or shameful of admissions.

If we make it through even one meeting we cannot help but notice the unfamiliar yet deeply soothing atmosphere of safety, which we may have never known before in our entire lives.

This sense of safety is a huge threat to our egos, who seem to scream — “I see what’s going on here — you think this is a safe place so you’re going to bare your guts like these people — oh, no you don’t. Your wounds are more infected, your secrets more shameful than anything here.

“Don’t you even think about it. You’ll find a way to bumble and fumble this up — you’ll say the wrong thing or someone will take offense to your face and they’ll turn against you and you’ll wind up hurt and alone and even worse off than you are now....”

And all the old voices come crashing in. “Never trust anyone. Never be vulnerable.” These are the mottos we lived by our whole lives, beliefs that served to protect us when we really were vulnerable as defenseless children in a sometimes cruel world. But now

these very same beliefs have driven us into the ground, onto our knees and into these rooms.

But our egos don't understand this — that our highly developed defense mechanisms aren't serving us anymore — and they flare up and pull out all the stops. They judge, squirm, rage, find new temptations and new excuses for acting out — anything for that quick fix we know so well.

The reasons not to stay in the rooms are vast and varied. It seems more of a miracle that anyone does keep coming back. There is only so much we can do to keep others with us. Some will never come back. Some will resist for years before finally surrendering.

We are perhaps the lucky

ones whose hearts and minds and spirits are too broken to run. We are the lucky ones who had no choice but to keep coming back. For the rest we must pray, and when we see them, eyes downcast in the corner, brow furrowed in battle with this hideous disease, we ought to gently and lovingly be their mirrors; show them our eyes and our hearts; show them that we can be vulnerable; show them that we see them, that we will not judge them, that we will welcome them and all of their pain.

I have found my Higher Power in this program and already am fortified beyond my wildest imaginings. But it was the human beings in the rooms who put me on the path to that

discovery.

It was the gentle and persistent urgings of fellows to call them, to share, to keep coming back that kept me in the rooms and set me on the Steps, and convinced me to relax the walls I have held up against my heart since childhood just enough to get a taste of the overwhelming love that exists among us, and that exists between us and God.

Once I had a taste of that, I knew there was no going back. No amount of fear or pain could keep me from my goal of living in that kind of love. There are not words to express my gratitude.

—Hanne, Los Angeles

***the Journal* themes and deadlines for 2013**

Issue #	Theme	Question Of The Day (QOD)	Submission deadline (articles and QOD)
#144	Sex and Love Addiction: What is Real?	“How did you become aware that sex and love addiction was real?”	July 15, 2013
#145	Addiction in the Age of Technology	“How has technology affected your addict behaviors?”	Sept. 15, 2013

Submit your writing at www.slaafws.org

They Need To Hit Rock Bottom

Perhaps newcomers who leave have not hit their personal rock bottom so they don't feel enough pain to propel them forward into recovery.

One year before I committed to the program, I went to two S.L.A.A. meetings, but I didn't feel that it was for me; I felt pain in my life, but it hadn't become unmanageable...yet!

One year later, my life had become unmanageable and I was desperate for reprieve from my pain and my obsessions.

After telling a friend about the obsessive thoughts occupying my mind, she invited me to an S.L.A.A. meeting, and I went with her that same evening. I felt like I had found a cure for my illness! I bought the S.L.A.A. book and brochures at that meeting and dove into the readings, began a "30-in-30," found a sponsor right away and began working my First Step.

I desperately wanted to improve my life and to find healing and relief from the pain. I was inspired by the recovery of so many people who described the way they felt when they entered the program and how much they had changed since, and I could relate to so many of the shares.

Old-timers seem to stay because they have worked the program and it has given them a better quality of life. Their shares indicate how much they have grown in recovery and how grateful they are to experience that change. It's inspiring to hear them describe the pain they felt walking into the rooms for



the first time and how different their lives look now because of the gifts that recovery has

brought into their lives.

—Michelle

Painful Withdrawal Can Lead To A New Life

If my withdrawal had not been as painful and difficult as it was, perhaps I would have had the willpower to try living in my disease a little longer.

But when my withdrawal started, I knew my life, at least as I knew it, was over. I was not even sure I'd survive this recovery process.

I went to every meeting I could, set bottom lines and got sober. I begged Higher Power for help constantly, and tried to put off thoughts of suicide one second at a time. I had the perfect sponsor and worked the Steps diligently. A dear friend suggested I start to meditate. Meditation didn't bring immediate peace, but it certainly has helped to supply me with peace today.

Because service had helped me to get sober in another program, I got involved in S.L.A.A. service early and that has been such a tremendous gift. It has also kept me accountable

to the program. I admit I am not altruistic about service. While I'm glad that some of the service that I have been a part of may have helped others, I perform service because when I am performing service, I am more likely to be sober, sane and happy.

One reason I didn't want to stay when I was new was the fear that I would not be able to have sex for a certain period of time, or ever again. And I didn't know if anything was worth that! Another reason was because I felt so bad that I had no hope that I'd ever feel better. However, because I could identify so strongly with other members' insanity, I thought there might be a .01% chance that life would get better if I did stay.

Today I'm definitely an old-timer in the program by most standards. However, I go to meetings, and I don't act out. I beg Higher Power for help to stay sober every morning and thank Higher Power for helping me to stay sober each night. I meditate almost every day and have a strong contact with my Higher Power. I sponsor others, served on the Board of Trustees for six years, and am on a Board Committee now. Most important, I think back to who I was when withdrawal started for me. I do not want to go back there and try to recover again. I'm not sure I'd get the gift of recovery a second time. For today, I can say that I'm here to stay, one day at a time.

—Chris



If you would like to participate in our meeting in print, contact the CJC
(Conference Journal Committee) at: www.slaafws.org/cjc
Or send your poetry/articles to *the Journal* at:
www.slaafws.org/journalsubmit

Hard Questions To Answer

These questions (“Why do newcomers leave? How do old-timers stay?”) were hard for me to answer. I don’t feel like a newcomer...but I don’t feel like an old-timer, either. I don’t really know what I am, other than someone who compulsively uses other people in an attempt to feel whole — a “people addict.”

This is a strategy that simply doesn’t work (and yet that doesn’t stop me from trying to make it work).

When I first started coming to S.L.A.A., I looked at program more as a safety net. I was going through a painful divorce and a friend invited me to attend a meeting with her. She thought maybe I was an anorectic. She was right (even though I had no idea what that meant).

But I was also other things. You see, in that especially painful season my desire to prove myself and feel accepted and loved had skyrocketed.

Things I never would have done before my divorce suddenly became desirable. Choices that I knew would hurt me seemed more attractive.

“Aren’t these choices bad for you?” I imagined people asking me.

“I don’t care,” I imagined answering, with a rebellious self-confidence.

I told myself that I deserved to feel good and I sensed myself becoming more willing to do whatever it took to feel that way. Caring about the consequences was at an all-time low for me.

All I wanted was to feel desirable and to have the pain go away and to experience — even for just a moment — some kind of “positive” emotion. I wanted some sort of love.

So I tried manipulating old friends into romance even though I didn’t want a relationship with them. I tried kissing women I hardly knew.

Every woman I met became a

potential person to use to prove that I was desirable. This was the start. My fantasies evolved to begin entertaining one-night stands and prostitutes. Where my imagination started to go scared me.

I knew that if I didn’t do something soon, these darker thoughts would quickly become a reality and I would be in the middle of a greater mess than I already was.

It was this fear of where my choices were going to eventually take me that kept me in S.L.A.A. I was (am?) a newcomer. I had been pretty involved in another program — being of service and having a sponsor and working the Steps. So I was comfortable in that kind of setting.

But being in S.L.A.A. was harder for me. My proverbial tail was between my legs. I hated going to meetings even though I always felt a little better afterwards.

—Anonymous

An Invitation For You

Enlarge your recovery by allowing others to get the same benefit that you get from reading *the Journal*.

It is a great way to carry S.L.A.A.’s message of hope and practice the Twelfth Step. The fellowship needs volunteers of all skills and levels of availability. Become a Journal Representative for your intergroup or home group, encouraging the use of *the Journal* as a source of topics, letting people know that there are Journals for sale, and ensuring that plenty of Journal subscription cards are always on the literature table.

Contact info: <http://www.slaafws.org>

Why I Keep Coming Back

I started coming to S.L.A.A. meetings on a recommendation of my therapist.

When she first recommended it, I said I wanted to kick my pornography addiction by myself. Of course, that didn't work. I eventually had to face the fact that I was powerless, and I asked for information on local S.L.A.A. meetings.

I went to one meeting every week. I shared, but I really didn't want to be there. I could talk about my addiction and my behaviors, but outside the meeting I couldn't stop acting out.

I felt guilty because by my third meeting, I was still using pornography and masturbating. So I stopped going to meetings.

A few weeks later, my therapist asked me how the S.L.A.A. meetings were going. I confessed that I had gone there a few times but stopped. She asked why and I said I felt guilty because I couldn't stop doing what I was doing. She said "David, that's when you need to go to the meetings. The people at the meetings aren't perfect either. They struggle with the addiction and that's why they go to the meetings."

I suddenly realized that I was not alone in my struggles and that I didn't have to be perfect to keep going to S.L.A.A. meetings.

That's the first reason why I keep coming back.

I started going to more meetings. I got to know more people and they got to know me. Several people often went out to dinner after a Friday night meeting and they started inviting me along.

I enjoyed the company and the conversation – sometimes about S.L.A.A., sometimes about everything but. I looked forward to the post-meeting conversations.



I started calling people I felt close to and asked if they would be at the meeting this week and if they wanted to go out afterwards. I was developing real friendships in the program.

That's the second reason I keep coming back.

I'd spend time outside the meetings with my new friends. We'd get together for coffee or go to the movies. We'd spend time at each other's houses playing games, watching TV, sharing meals, or just talking and listening. We would celebrate birthdays together, and send each other Christmas cards and post cards from

vacations.

We would do favors for each other. I was no longer just a person going to S.L.A.A. meetings with other people. I was part of a community.

That's the biggest reason I keep coming back. If I stopped going to meetings, I would have to give up my community. I know from experience that I am loved and accepted by the S.L.A.A. community. I like that feeling and I do not want to give it up.

When a newcomer walks into an S.L.A.A. meeting, try to remember that this person is frightened.

The newcomer is afraid that they don't belong and they won't be accepted by this bunch of strangers. Welcome the newcomers and talk to them. Shake their hands. Introduce yourself. Talk to them before and after the meeting.

If people regularly go somewhere after a meeting, invite the newcomers along. Accept them into the S.L.A.A. community. If they feel accepted, maybe they'll want to keep coming back and the newcomers will eventually become old-timers.

— David B. Worcester, MA

The Paradoxical Characteristics

In my opinion, and nothing I say is original, the reason newcomers become old-timers is :

Somehow, by the grace of the Higher Power, they change.

Change we must.....

I count the beginnings of my "love affair with the 36 principles of S.L.A.A." as the day I received the Basic Text in the post, having asked an Al-anon woman in Maine, across the border from St. Leonard, New Brunswick, Canada, to have it mailed to her.

This was 1998: my 4th year with A.A., and my 34th year as an RC religious sister, living with 3 much longer-time nuns in the convent, going to A.A. meetings in New Brunswick and Maine. Even though "dry" in A.A., I was still "acting out" and in denial about my addictive/destructive sex and love pattern,

a pattern of having a double life: "the good nun" on the outside, and "the emotionally bankrupt, full-of-shame-and-guilt wreck" of a person on the inside.

Only when I moved to Montreal in 2000 to be with my partner and decided to "leave the convent," was I able to attend S.L.A.A. meetings, and to be a *newcomer one day at a time*.

That was before 9/11; before Katrina, before Chernobyl, etc.etc. etc. before, before, before.

It seems to involve not only *Eros, Agape and Caritas*, the hormones of the sex glands and the heart, but also the hormones of the thymus gland, those of work: doing as well as being and desiring.

Augustine said, "*love and do as you will*." I hear this as: place your whole being in the care of



the Higher Power of your understanding. Place your eros and thymus in "right order" and your "doing" will flow from your "being."

Listening to the 12 Characteristics at every meeting, slowly, slowly did I come to realize that identifying with these (and not comparing) helped me define my own bottom lines (no sex outside a

committed, monogamous relationship) and top lines (practicing the 36 principles to deal with my sexual, emotional and social anorexia) so that eros and thymus came into better balance.

It seems that newcomers become long-timers because they/we come to realize that the Characteristics are really paradoxical: We have heard of the Paradoxical Commandments, i.e. people are going to hurt you, *but love them, be nice to them ANYWAY.....etc.*

Paradoxical characteristic #1: *Having few healthy boundaries, we become sexually involved with and/or emotionally attached to people without knowing them.*

And I say: "Have a few healthy boundaries ANYWAY" — maybe we will get to know people as imperfectly perfect.

Characteristic #11 says: *To avoid feeling vulnerable, we may retreat from all intimate involvement, mistaking sexual*

and emotional anorexia for recovery.

And I suggest: "Try being vulnerable ANYWAY. Make a few mistakes, ANYWAY. It's OK to make mistakes. We are all imperfectly perfect. And for some of us the only way recovery really comes is when we learn from our "F.O.G." (our Fantastic Opportunities for Growth).

I was once told that I am at my best when I am vulnerable. It takes a lot for me to trust that I am safe within the embrace of this recovery program and people, and that it's OK to "let the walls down," to find my small, truthful voice.

Characteristic #12 says: *We assign magical qualities to others. We idealize and pursue them, then blame them for not fulfilling our fantasies and expectations.*

And I suggest: "Idealize people ANYWAY...expect the best from people ANYWAY."

For the past year, I have been in an emotional bottom, dealing

with the dashing of my magical thinking against the rocks of emotional battering, wondering if I am masochistic. I have clung to the anchor of this recovery program, sometimes hiding in the caves of despair, but knowing there are people here, and here, and here, to listen.

Someone once said, "*War is the terrorism of the rich, and terrorism is the war of the poor.*"

And I ask: "What does the war and terrorism of the recovering newcomer/long-timer look like?"

It looks like the circles of love and service meeting online or on chairs, facing the paradoxes of war and terrorism in our own hearts, taking up the responsibility of letting the hand of S.L.A.A. "always be there," practicing the principles in all our encounters of the paradoxical kind.

— Beth L, Montreal

Service Work Helped Me Stay

I attended my first S.L.A.A. meeting with a temporary A.A. sponsor when I was visiting a large city on October 10, 1983. I continued to attend meetings for four weeks and then I went back to my home where there were no meetings. I moved to another large city and started a new S.L.A.A. meeting there. For years I rotated among various 12-Step meetings that dealt with sex addiction and some that dealt with other issues.

In May of 2001, my A.A.

sponsor told me to take a service commitment. I looked for the fellowship that had the least smoking before and after meetings and among potential recovery partners.

I choose S.L.A.A. and went to a new anorexia focus meeting and volunteered to be Intergroup Representative. I attended my first Intergroup meeting in June of 2001 and have been attending ever since.

I joined the Conference Literature Committee (CLC) in November of 2001 and

volunteered to be delegate to the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) in 2002 where I also joined the newly formed Anorexia Committee and the Diversity Committee.

My service on Conference Committees has kept me in S.L.A.A.

Another big contributing factor in my staying in S.L.A.A. is the Pamphlet, "Anorexia, Sexual, Social, Emotional," that was Conference-approved in 1992 and the challenge of writing more literature about

recovery from anorexia.

This challenge, in writing more S.L.A.A. literature, took me to the Conference Charter Committee. And I worked to change the way draft literature was prepared on its way to becoming S.L.A.A. Conference-approved literature.

The service on Conference Committees, attending five ABMs, and interactions with others in the process to create new and better literature for S.L.A.A. has kept me focused on this program and reduced the likelihood that I will move to a different 12-Step fellowship. The cigarette smoking of others also reduced the likelihood of me moving to one of those fellowships.

Another factor was my health and financial issues which made attending face-to-face meetings difficult. So the service activity by teleconference and email was much more easily accessible for me.

Another factor was the long-distance sponsorship program. Talking with people who lived across the continent and over the oceans as sponsees, as a temporary or permanent sponsor, or as recovery partners, became an important part of my recovery.

If I had done service only locally, I suspect that I would have continued to drift from one 12-Step fellowship to another.

So, for me, the two strongest reasons for staying in S.L.A.A. are participation in the long distance sponsorship program and service on Conference Committees.

My newest venture is participating in the creation of the new first ever S.L.A.A. 12X12 Book. I look forward to meeting more of you as you volunteer to help with this

project. We need people to read drafts and ask questions. Anyone who can read English can do service in this way. Please sign up to help.

Working with and attending meetings of Conference Committees and literature creation writing groups gave me an opportunity to stay connected, interested, have many focuses and goals, while working together with some of the same people for longer periods of time. Faster rotation of service in weekly face-to-face meetings would have made it easier for me to continue my habit of leaving friends and acquaintances and moving to new ones.

My pattern was to do this by rotating from meetings in one area to meetings in another area. Sometimes I drove long distances to attend meetings far from home several times a week when there were meetings close to home.

This helped me keep a distance which I apparently needed, as my child abuse issues were so strong and powerful that I could not stay in relationships with sponsors, therapists, or recovery partners. However, doing service on Conference Committees and long-distance sponsorships gave me the combination I needed of ongoing continuity without the closeness that I could not tolerate.

I found S.L.A.A. to be more flexible than other 12-Step fellowships and that flexibility has been very attractive to me. I try to write flexibility into drafts for new S.L.A.A. literature.

I encourage flexibility in my relationships with temporary sponsees, ongoing sponsees and recovery partners. I would like a co-sponsor, but so far

have not found one.

Horizontal relationships work much better for me than vertical relationships. I did better in group therapy than one-on-one therapy.

Conference Committees have a much more horizontal relationship quality.

The leadership rotates, but the horizontal relationships continue before, during and after the leadership periods. Even when I work with current or past Board of Trustees members my relationships to them are horizontal rather than vertical.

Since I started doing Conference Committee work, my relationships are lasting longer. From college graduation in 1965 until 1988, I never had a friend who was not a family member for more than 3 years. Service on Conference Committees provided me with long term relationships that I avoided in face-to-face meetings. When I attended face-to-face meetings I frequently rotated to other meetings and to other fellowships. I have now been on Conference Committees working with the same people for what for me is many years and I plan to continue these relationships. There is a long way to go in writing the S.L.A.A. 12X12 and many other pieces of new literature.

Thank you to S.L.A.A. for meeting my needs. I came and went from 1983 until 2001, always considering myself a member, but going to other fellowships to get certain specific needs met and continuing my pattern of moving on and on, leaving relationships and making new ones. I have been here from 2001 into 2013 and plan to continue.

— Larry L.

Climbing Out Of The Pit Of Desperation

I recall all too clearly the terrifying, pit-of-my-stomach feeling that overcame me when I walked into my first S.L.A.A. meeting.

From what I had heard from my friend who brought me, I knew I needed to give the rooms a try.

I had been an active participant of other Twelve-Step groups previously but none quite quenched the deeply rooted pain I was living in every moment of every day.

S.L.A.A. sounded different from other rooms to me.

I sat in that meeting, shaking a little inside, listening to a stranger read the “Characteristics of Sex and Love Addicts,” and in that moment it was confirmed that I was in the right place.

An upwelling of emotion came up and tears began dripping down my face.

Could it be possible that this place, this program, and these people could actually assist me in climbing out of my pit of desperation and franticness?

I was scared and hopeful all at once, and the meeting was only six minutes in.

After listening to several others share, my spirit felt like it was home. I finally fit somewhere. I finally found a place, a people, who shared my aching chest (the “grand canyon inside,” as I once heard it referred to).

Moreover, many people in that room expressed something even more beautiful; they had hope for recovery, healing, and peace.



As I continued to attend meetings, I began to toy with the idea that maybe I was too broken to be there or maybe I was not broken enough.

The discomfort of understanding the internal work I had ahead of me was overwhelming, to say the least. And I searched for any reason to not fit in. “*What would be a valid reason for me to leave this program?*” I thought to myself. I wanted a reason to run and to escape my discomfort that came from my awareness of my addiction.

Finally, my pain had a name. After years of multiple forms of therapy, trauma seminars, spiritual healing sessions, medication, meditation, and everything in between, it was clear that S.L.A.A. is what could finally help me.

I was in so much pain and unmanageability that I knew this was my best shot, and possibly my only shot. A few days before I attended my first S.L.A.A. meeting I had been released from the hospital where I was on hold for attempted suicide. My addiction was unmanageable to the point of literally wanting to die. Despite my best efforts and intentions, I could not stop myself from acting out in the insane cycle of my addiction. S.L.A.A. opened my eyes to my most vulnerable and broken place and there was no escaping the profundity and profoundness of realizing and naming myself as a sex and love addict.

What kept me coming back to the rooms and doing the work was twofold: I believed I had no other choice (because my life was on the line), and I wanted what old-timers in the room had.

I am now about to celebrate being in S.L.A.A. for one year, and I can say with all gratitude

and humility that I am unrecognizable to myself because I have experienced significant healing.

I have been met with my true self and I have been graced with true peace.

I am in no way a maven on the subject of S.L.A.A. recovery, nor am I a psychotherapist who can fairly and accurately assess what the reasons are for people leaving or staying in our rooms.

However, even in the span of one year I have observed many people coming and going.

From my own personal experiences and my observations, I believe the following are generally reasons why new comers leave S.L.A.A.:

It’s too overwhelming.

They leave because of the pain they feel from their realization of their profound frailty.

They haven’t hit rock bottom yet.

Many newcomers who walk into the rooms don’t just pop in — they check out a group that might offer some community and support.

They don’t get a sponsor or do Step work.

While attending S.L.A.A. meetings is an important aspect of a recovery program, a sponsor and Step work are vital to the healing process.

They do not engage with fellows.

Outreach calls, fellowship, and befriending S.L.A.A. fellows are all extremely helpful tools that bring a deeper level of connectivity overall.

For me, making outreach calls was intimidating at the start. There was a point when I would have done anything to avoid calling a virtual stranger

and telling them about the demons I was facing.

I didn’t want to tell someone I missed my toxic ex-husband or ex-boyfriend(s), that I felt so lonely and sad I wanted to sleep and not take care of myself in basic ways, or that I broke bottom lines.

Additionally, I wanted to leave meetings quickly and not make eye contact with anyone, let alone go out to eat with people from the meeting.

I felt a lot of shame when I started program and I think my discomfort of being vulnerable in meetings detoured me from wanting anyone to know me outside of my attendance.

Although I knew a small handful of people in S.L.A.A., I hesitate to have called them “friends” at that point in my process. Six months in, however, I met some amazing women that I liked a lot.

I slowly ventured out and started calling them, making coffee dates one-on-one with them, going to fellowship with them, and eventually found them to be invaluable relationships that have aided my recovery immensely.

S.L.A.A. simply isn’t the right program for them.

This is probably the easiest and most difficult idea for me to sit with.

My personal recovery in S.L.A.A. has been so tremendous that I, at times, find myself believing every person not only *could* benefit and heal in the program but that they *should*.

I see myself very much as a child in that sense, being so excited to share something good with other people that I forget that just because S.L.A.A. worked miracles for me, doesn’t mean it’s for everyone.

Sometimes people come into the rooms due to the pain of a

break up, not due to significantly dysfunctional, abusive, or insane life patterns. What works for some people does not work for all.

With all of that said, fewer things bring me hope like old-timers in S.L.A.A. do. One of the most meaningful gifts an old-timer extended to me was the phrase, “When you don’t have faith for yourself, hold on to my faith. My God is big enough.”

That still rings in my heart to this day, and there have been many moments where I have needed to hold on to a fellow’s faith because mine felt dim or nonexistent.

When I was incapable of believing healing was possible for myself, I just looked at those who had multiple years of recovery (some in double digits) and was granted hope for my own journey.

I am convinced, now more than ever, that I will be an old-timer. The following are characteristics I’ve observed about old-timers and how/why they stay.

They identify that their addiction is chronic and must be consistently treated.

I cannot count how many times I sit in a meeting and hear the phrase, “I was in S.L.A.A. for years and then I left because I

was feeling better and thought I was cured from my addiction. Now I am back and I am in bad shape. My addiction didn’t go away.”

While there are many opinions about whether or not sex and love addiction is a permanent condition or not, there are some of us who have a sense that our disease is too great for us to comprehend. And we believe we will need continual assistance to maintain a sane and healthy life with sane and healthy relationships.

The people who have recovery and who I admire, all share the theme of gratitude and the clarity that they need the rooms and fellows.

They have “family” in program.

Many of us in the rooms have come from very broken upbringings or have strained/estranged relationships with our families.

Another phrase I hear in the rooms from old-timers is, “I found my family here. You are all my family.” I observe that in many ways old-timers find solid support, much like what a functional, ideal family offers, in the rooms. Generally, I find that old-timers have a solid community of fellows and they engage others in their life fairly

openly.

They engage opportunities to be of service, sharing their experience, strength, and hope.

If old-timers weren’t around, I am not sure that newcomers would stay.

There is something beautiful about someone with longstanding recovery to be available in the rooms for sponsorship, speaking/leading, and sharing their experience, strength, and hope with everyone, especially newcomers.

There is hope in the rooms because old-timers remind everyone of it.

They symbolize that it is not a perfect process, it’s okay to do things messily, and they show the importance of rigorous honesty.

The real truth of the matter is that every person gains something different from S.L.A.A. and each story is unique and beautiful in its own right.

The reasons people come or go are varied, and the reasons others stay long-term are also varied.

Regardless of where anyone is in their healing process, every single person brings a gift to the program – themselves.

— Sarah, Los Angeles



Share space

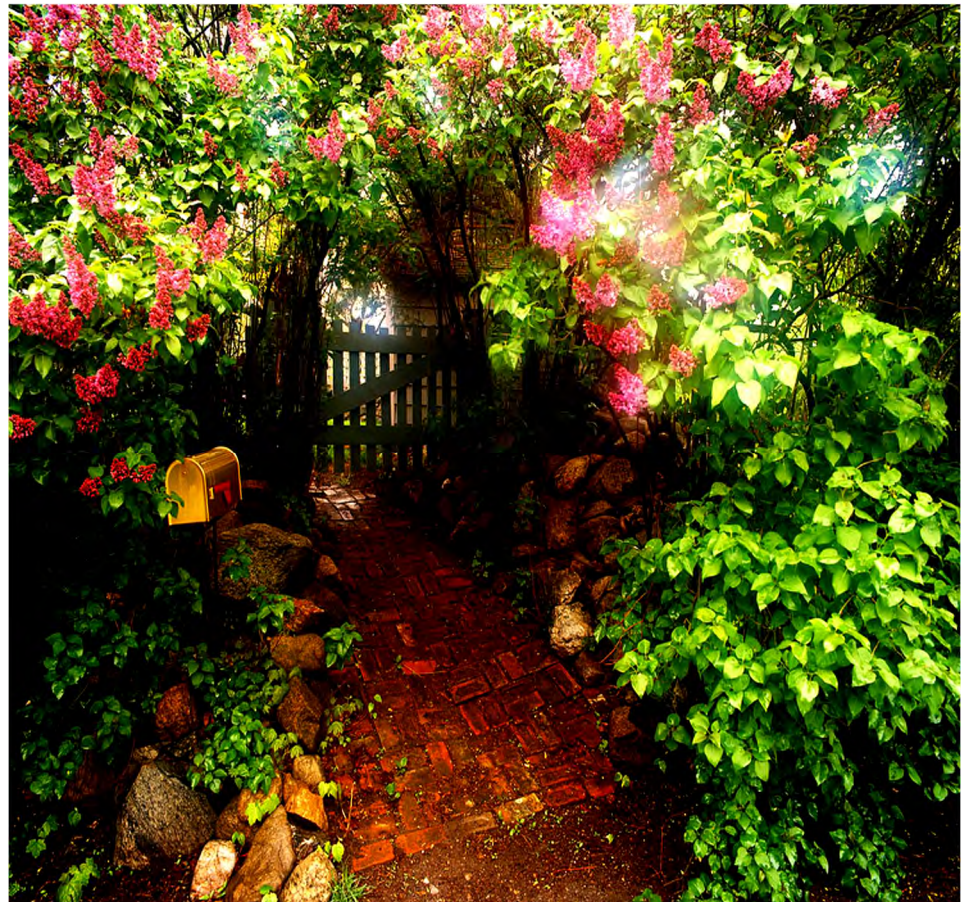
Understanding Prayers Unanswered

My Higher Power never gets pissed at me, no matter how pissed I am at God. God is never disappointed in me and never feels let down, even when I am making all bad choices.

God does not ignore nor abandon me, even when I ignore or abandon my God-consciousness. That is an absolute guarantee, because God always understands why I am pissed or making bad choices, even though I don't even know why myself.

No matter how much I try to go in the wrong directions, God will continue to bring people and compassion and helpfulness into my path to help me, no matter how many times I refuse the help and ignore the very people who would ease my pain and discomfort within myself and in relationship to others.

God never has, and never



will, bring me to or want me in situations that will cause pain. Those situations are the result of my bad choices or the bad choices of others who are, like me, often creating pain because I/we think I/we deserve it.

God uses only love and compassion and helpfulness as tools for my recovery. I sometimes hold on to suffering, out of fear that if I let it go, even worse suffering will follow.

If I can just remember that

when a doctor sets a broken bone, the moments when the bones move are a pain more acute than ever, but that relief will follow, then I will not run away, I will stand still and hurt. And healing will surely come and stay.

If I pay attention, I know that God will bring the “doctors” into my path who can set the broken bones in my soul, so that it can heal, and be strong again.

God, I ask for each of us that

we will realize what your will is for us. And that we will know you will give us the power to carry that out.

For myself I ask for a renewal of my subscription to laughter and the ability to see the humor in my wandering all over the place instead of straight down the path of recovery.

Your often rebellious and stubborn, but hopeful junior partner,

— Barbara L.

Prayers Used for Step 11 Work

GENERAL RELATIONSHIP PRAYER:

“Higher Power, please help me to move from having superficial friendships to having meaningful relationships with others. Teach me how to love, respect, care for, and to refrain from judging other people. I ask you today for freedom from the need to fix or control my friends and from the desire to have them fix me. God, teach me how to keep from using others and to set loving boundaries so I will no longer get used. Above all, show me how to be a true friend and share my life with others as you see fit. May your will always be done in my life.”

PARTNERSHIP PRAYER:

“God, please assist me in forming a true partnership with another human being. Guide me in communicating and respecting a partner. Show me how to give of myself and share all aspects of my life with another person because I choose to let someone know who I really am. Help me learn to give and receive love from a partner and put their needs first without regard to what I expect to receive in return. Higher Power, help me to recognize this soul-mate that you have chosen for me to experience life with and teach me how to unconditionally love this partner, while working to conform my ideals to yours. Amen.”

— Anonymous

“A December Harvest”

The truth is that I’m now free of the mental impairment that was underway for so long, and am doing the internal breaking down necessary to clear away the rubbish and slowly, ploddingly, rebuilding from what remains. What has been harvested is a healthful, sustainable existence.

My sense of self is still coming together;
disparate threads
a long time frayed
teased into meaningless flyaways.

Likes with likes,
A rare useful piece put into place
The rest flagellate and self-sift
Looking for mates

I’m on the hunt,
Nose to the ground
Seeking the parts
That wish to be found

Plucked from the gutters
Snatched from a bird’s nest
A bundle of kindling covered in dust
Completes today’s mission.
That bundle was sad,
It was awaiting transition.

It’s all there,
I’m assured by professionals
Disguised
In a thousand camouflages

A piece is in you,
I see the reflection
Its blueprint sketched
and safely secreted.

Water colored threads entwine like pistons in an engine
Vital, but useless until the engine is assembled.
Sit back, without instructions this will take a while.

More parts, more cloaks unwrapped
What once was a paltry motley lot
now is a modest heap.

Mathematically impossible permutations
Like puzzle pieces from unknown project/projects,
without the guiding framework
They make OK paperweights.

— **Jacque C., Long Beach, CA**

Meditation Book Project

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE:

1. PERSONAL SHARES FOR MEDITATIONS.
2. POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS/PRAYERS.

PLEASE EMAIL SHARES TO THE *JOURNAL* WWW.SLAAFWS.ORG

Leaving a Relationship

SHARE: For many of us, choosing whether or not to leave an unhealthy relationship can feel like one of the most excruciating decisions we've ever had to make in our lives. We fear and dread the loneliness. Will our self-esteem be able to endure the feelings of rejection when s/he doesn't call and beg us to come back? Not to mention the knowledge that we will be having to do without sex during the abstinence period. All of these issues can be a part of making a choice to end an unhealthy relationship and, yes, they can be painful. But the most painful time is the first day we make that decision. After the decision is made, the pain eases somewhat and a calm washes over us in its place.

— I.B. - Los Angeles, California

AFFIRMATION: *May I pray to Higher Power to provide me with the strength to get through that first wave of healthy pain that will lead to the calm, still waters that are the serenity and peace of recovery.*

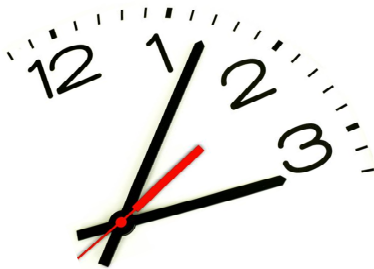
THE INSPIRATION LINE YOUR 24/7 SUPPORT

Did you know that you can call the Inspiration Line at any time to help you get through a particularly difficult day?

Did you know that 24 hours a day, every day, there is a message of experience, strength and hope to help Sex and Love Addicts?

Did you know you can call the Inspiration Line NOW ?

215-574-2120



▶ **How we help.....**

- Over 122,000 calls have been received since 2006, with an average of 2,226 calls a month now.
- After listening to the message, YOU have an opportunity to leave your own message for the speaker to listen to.
- You can go to <http://www.slaadvi.org/inspiration-line.html> to download a month's worth of messages, FOR FREE.

The Inspiration Line is presented to the SLAA Fellowship by the Greater Delaware Valley Intergroup. To find out more or to volunteer, call the Line and leave a message.

