


theJournal

Issue # 144

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Sex and Love Addiction
What is Real?

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.

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader:

Trusted websites say that there is much debate among mental health professionals about whether sex addiction is real. Sex addiction won't be in the fifth edition of the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders," which is used to diagnose mental disorders. (But they just added binge-eating disorder as an official diagnosis, so maybe they will consider sex addiction next time.)

It took 150 years for alcoholism to be recognized as a disease (from the time medical professionals called it a disease in 1804 to the American Medical Society officially declaring alcoholism an addiction in 1956). But those of us who have experienced sex and love addiction know at the core of our being that it's real. Some of us have to experience horrible pain before we realize it and others just believe. We have some really great stories in this issue about the moment that some S.L.A.A. members realized that this truly is an addiction and that they have the disease. Hopefully society and the medical profession can catch up soon!

When I came in to S.L.A.A., I believed in sex addiction but wasn't so sure it was my problem. When I finally got in enough suicidal pain, I realized that I definitely was a sex addict. But love addiction was more difficult to believe in. When I was hit over the head with the hammer of love addiction though, I woke up and finally found relief from my disease. Like they say in A.A.: "I came to meetings, then I came to, then I came to believe." I will always be grateful to S.L.A.A. for helping me realize sex and love addiction is real, for giving me a place to go where I am understood, and for helping me stay out of the disease one day at a time.

Lisa C., Managing Editor, *the Journal*

Correction: Issue #143 published a flyer about the Greater Delaware Valley Intergroup Inspirational line but left off the phone number. It is reprinted in this issue on page 36. The editor regrets the error.

First Things First

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.

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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.

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Question of the Day & Answers from Yesterday

The Question of the Day from the last issue was, “How did you become aware that sex and love addiction was real?” Here are

some wonderful responses for your enjoyment. They are not presented in any particular order. The next two questions are: Issue #145 — Addiction in the Age of Technology — “How has technology affected your addict behaviors?” — The deadline for submissions is 9/15/13; and Issue #146 — After Sober Dating: Not Losing Yourself in the Relationship — “Have you ever felt like turning a healthy relationship into a closed/enmeshed relationship? What tools did you use to stay healthy?” The deadline for submissions is 11/15/13. Please send answers to www.slaafws.org.

“HOW DID YOU BECOME AWARE THAT SEX AND LOVE
ADDICTION WAS REAL?”

My therapist told me about S.L.A.A. and I thought she was crazy! I think she not only wanted me to get to a meeting...but to run as fast as I could! I was in such disbelief that I did an internet search on the term and was able to read a lot about the subject. I related so much and it eventually led me into the online room, then months later to phone meetings and face to face meetings. I'm grateful that the chaos that almost led me to suicide actually drove me into this recovery room! It has changed my life.....for the better!

— LISA, TX

I became aware it was real on the night that I had a lovely dinner with my wife before a Monday meeting, and as she drove off for home I realized I could scoot back to the office in my car and get in at least 7 minutes on the internet adult chat room before having to report to the meeting.

— RAY, SACRAMENTO

I became aware that sex and love addiction was a legit addiction when my first A.A. sponsor suggested I seek help from the S.L.A.A. program.

— JAX, LONG BEACH, CA

QUESTION OF THE DAY

I was in a relationship for a few years with the man of my dreams, and I found myself intriguing uncontrollably. I knew the risks and I could not stop. The fact that I knew my partner was by far my chosen partner whom I loved, appreciated, and wanted made the disease glaring. I knew it was an addiction and not just a question of choice. My partner was my choice and a tormenting fantasy was a compulsion I could not change on my own power. Recovery restores me to choice: The greatest gift.

— ANONYMOUS

About nine years after a friend labeled me a sex addict, which I poo-pooed, I was in rehab and it dawned on me that I had a problem. It was later driven home in a Step study.

— JIM B., DALLAS, TX

I thought I was an alcoholic who got myself into trouble with men when I was drinking. After I quit drinking my desire to act out did not go away. That is when I realized that alcohol was not my primary addiction.

— D., DALLAS, TX

After my first relationship ended in a blaze of glory, I made a promise to myself to never commit, never be attached to another person, to “be a free spirit,” which quickly turned into a constant pursuit of one night stands with secret expectations they would turn into a relationship. By about a year later, I knew that I was “S.L.A.A.-ed” out and needed help.

— REBECCA K.P., HOUSTON, TX

It became apparent to me that sex and love addiction was real when I realized that I was willing to continue in my acting out behavior even though I was about to lose the one relationship that meant the most to me.

— GORDY B., DALLAS, TX

“HOW DID YOU BECOME AWARE THAT SEX AND LOVE ADDICTION WAS REAL?”

I was always aware, on some level. Throughout my life, I'd referred to myself as a “passion junkie, one-week wonder,” and other such endearing terms to label my (un)certain dis-ease. I was grateful to finally learn that a group of me actually existed.

— MADELINE, LOS ANGELES

My symptoms of emotional ups and downs, with the presence and absence of my qualifier, lead me to believe that I have an addiction. He calls and says he is coming over. I slip from low energy into high overdrive. He is here and I am so happy and grateful for his presence and hang on every word.

He leaves and I am fallen in mood and spirit with a sadness so profound! Then oddly I encounter an email regarding addiction.

I share my immediate experience of painful withdrawal and as I feel my spirit's center, I am grateful for a program that recognizes this suffering.

Thank you for this tool and many others that are helpful in my recovery.

—WENDY S.

I never thought it wasn't real. I knew the relationships I was having with people were toxic. They were more harmful than narcotics.

I saw that other people didn't have the same problems. One day, after an awful incident with a man I could not break up with, I found myself wondering if it were possible to be addicted to a person. I did some internet research and was introduced to the terms “codependence” and “love addiction.”

I found my way to a meeting and when I heard the “Characteristics of Sex and Love Addiction” read in the preamble, I heard a concise description of my relationship history and my way of thinking. I felt an immediate sense of relief.

For years I had struggled to “be like everyone else” but I couldn't. I thought I was just a freak and I was doomed to live a horrible life. When I heard that list and realized there was a name for my affliction, I knew that in the diagnosis there was hope. My problem had a name and therefore could be treated. I found hope. Today, five years later, I am indeed living a new, positive, unfolding life.

— T., TUCSON

QUESTION OF THE DAY

The pain caused by my fantasies was huge. When the bubble popped, the pain of reality was great.

— EVEY, TUCSON, AZ

I stayed with partners that I did not love, for sex. I also fell in love with a man before actually getting to know him.

— MELISSA, TUCSON, AZ

I developed a pattern that I could not control.

— PAMELA, TUCSON

Yet another relationship ended.

— GITA, TUCSON

I realized addiction was real when I read a book about love addiction that was written by a mental health professional, and it told the story of every relationship I've ever had and everything I was ever taught about relationships all the way back to childhood!

— MADDY, TUCSON

I realized it was real when I went through physical withdrawal because I could not act out.

— ELIZABETH, TUCSON, AZ

I wanted to return to two possible men who had given me an STD. When they rejected me, I began to search for new relationships.

— TONI, TUCSON, AZ

It clobbered me in the head!

— ROGER, TUCSON

I needed to stop/prevent abusive relationships in my life yet I was surrounded with abusive people because that was what was comfortable for me because of my past and my relationships in my childhood. I could NOT stop on my own.

— KATHY, TUCSON

I read two personal accounts (in a magazine) from two celebrities about their experience with sex and love addiction.

— RASHAD, TUCSON

My girlfriend read every email, for 8 hours, that I sent to women during our relationship. The scope of my powerlessness became evident.

— JARED F., LOS ANGELES

Acting Out Was A Full Time Job

What? Sex and love addiction is real? Okay, bad joke. I tend to joke when I'm nervous, which is what I am right now writing this article. Sex and love addiction is real folks. Trust me, it's very real. But before I explain how I became aware of its existence, let me give you a brief glimpse into my pre-program life. Buckle up my fellow S.L.A.A. peeps, it's a bumpy road.

Women, women, women. All day long women. Women in the morning, women at night, women during the day at work, women helped me feel alright. Yes, I was going for a rhyme there. I hated my life.

Scratch that. My life was empty. I was alone and didn't like myself — didn't like the man I saw in the mirror one bit. My head told me I was a loser. Ugly. Stupid. Worthless. A nobody. All of these thoughts equaled pain and a lot of it. Pain equaled the need to "numb" out.

And numb out I did. Numbed out with porn, massage parlors, hookers, swingers, and phone chat lines to name a few. Numbed out in the morning and numbed out at night. I even numbed out in the middle of the



day at work just to feel right. Yes, more rhymes. Hopefully you get my point. I was an addict and didn't know it. Honestly, I didn't see anything wrong with my behavior.

Acting out as we call it was a full time job and I was good at it. Each day I'd wake up and cast out as many lines as I could — literally trolling the web for a bite.

I was praying that someone would like me — praying that

someone would want to meet me, and more specifically be with me. My head, which we've established is a dangerous neighborhood, told me that without the validation of a woman I'd die.

Did I see this as an addiction? Heck no. I just thought it was normal. Onward with the acting out! So I kept at it day in and day out for 13 years. It was my life's work — my thesis — my holy grail — my addiction??

Something interesting happened— a shift if you will. The highs from acting out started to pale in comparison to the lows I felt afterwards.

I'd feel dirty. Cheap. Used. Disgusting. Yet I kept acting out. I kept searching for more highs followed by deeper lows. I couldn't stop. I think I was starting to want to stop, yet I couldn't.

One girl a day turned into two and then three. Tested before each one of them for STD's? Nope. And on and on it went each time with deeper and deeper lows.

Help came from an alcoholic. "Dude you're a sex addict," he told me. Pardon me?

"I know an addict when I see one," he said. Me, an addict? No chance. Yet my gut knew it to be true. I looked online for sex and love addiction and was shocked at what I found. Tons of information. Probably right then and there was my first glimpse, minor

all be it, into the idea that sex and love addiction was real.

I was drawn to one site in particular — S.L.A.A. — Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous.

Gotta love those 40 questions. I read and related to each and every one of them. Yikes. Sitting there in shock and very uncomfortable, I quickly logged off the site and went looking for a hit online. I need a woman's validation — not a cure to my so called problem. Self-powered cure, here I come!

Yuck, more pain. So I revisited the S.L.A.A. website a couple of days later. This time, I read the characteristics of sex and love addiction. Are you kidding me?

I was all of them. How did this happen? Am I really an addict? Is someone messing with me? I decided it was time to check out a meeting.

It was a Wednesday night newcomer meeting and I sat in the far back corner of the room — watching, listening, picking up on everything around me.

I felt like a child among men and women. More importantly though, I heard, both through struggles and recovery, my story. Perhaps just a little bit from each person, but from each person I could relate.

If they were sex and love addicts, then perhaps I was one,

too. My shirt was drenched in sweat. Shame. That happens when I feel shame. Yep. I'd have

to say I belong. I'd have to say that's when I knew sex and love addiction was real.

— ZACHARY, LOS ANGELES

Sex And Love Addiction Might Be Real, If...

Everyone in our group laughed when I read this question. It's obvious, isn't it? Yet this is the very question my addictive self would love for me to "get into my head" and focus in on the theory. It is as if my addict is telling me "before you get started, you need to thoroughly research this, being very objective and scientific, of course."

Meanwhile, I am destroying my life while debating whether the carnage around me is "real."

But, if I need to know for sure, here are some helpful reminders from my life:

1. If you choose to stay in a big city while the dog is being trimmed because you don't want to spend ten bucks for gas to drive home but then you spent two hundred bucks on a prostitute, sex and love addiction might be real.

2. If, when asked by a doctor working for the county, "why didn't you use protection when having sex in the back of a car?"

and you honestly can't answer because you know better, sex and love addiction might be real.

3. If you have a running list that you are actively maintaining of who you are going to marry when your spouse dies and you already are planning the honeymoon with the top person, sex and love addiction might be real.

4. If there is a news story or documentary about prostitution or porn stars and you feel it is your civic duty to stay up to watch this so you may "keep abreast of current events," sex and love addiction might be real.

5. If you feel a moral obligation to visit an adult book store or massage parlor because you visited another one in the city and it is only fair that both get equal revenue, sex and love addiction might be real.

6. If you ever ran from a trailer and drove away down the alley expecting you might get shot

because the girl’s boyfriend came home unexpectedly, sex and love addiction might be real.

7. If you know your STD or HIV status for only up to a month or two because you do things so often that require you to retake the test, sex and love addiction might be real.

8. If you ever turned off the safe search feature and typed in innocuous words hoping that it would “accidently” bring up porn, sex and love addiction might be real.

9. If after having sex with (choose: blond, brunette,

redhead, Asian, Hispanic, African-American, etc.) and you feel dissatisfied and you suddenly realize that what you really need is to have sex with (choose: blond, brunette, redhead, Asian, Hispanic, African-American, etc.), sex and love addiction might be real.

10. If the only time in your life you don’t feel “less than” is when someone else is pursuing you or giving themselves to you or having sex with you, sex and love addiction might be real.

I could go on, but make your own list.

— DAVID, BOONE, NC

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

Issue #	Theme	Question Of The Day (QOD)	Submission deadline (articles and QOD)
#145	Addiction in the Age of Technology	“How has technology affected your addict behaviors?”	Sept. 15, 2013
#146	After Sober Dating: Not Losing Yourself in the Relationship	“Have you ever felt like turning a healthy relationship into a closed/enmeshed relationship? What tools did you use to stay healthy?”	Nov. 15, 2013
#147	Fantasy versus Reality	“Do you find it difficult to live in/see reality? What helps you stay out of Fantasyland?”	Jan. 15, 2014

How I Know Sex and Love Addiction is Real

To ask my addict brain if it can define itself is an impossible task. But that does not mean that I think sex and love addiction isn't part of reality. It only means I must rely on outside proof that this condition has run my life without my knowledge for the past 34 years.

In my, comparatively, very short time in recovery it is obvious to me that I have a real, painful disease called sex and love addiction.

Three and a half months ago my relationship with my qualifier ended. I thought my life ended at the same time. The pain was unbearable. I could find no other solution than to take my life.

I tried the common recovery things – seeing my therapist, acts of self-care, journaling, reading recovery books, activities I previously enjoyed, etc. I learned all of these tools in recovery from codependency. However, little did I know that my recovery had only scratched the surface of my deep-seated disease of a complete life-strategy and obsession of sex and emotional dependency.

Anything I did had no positive effect on the suicidal thoughts. Any reminders of my qualifier only intensified the de-

sire to die.

Suicidal ideation resulted in a stay at the local psychiatric hospital and then a month-long treatment for depression and anxiety. Only in the last week of my inpatient work did I see a specialized therapist for a sexual compulsivity consult. I still remember the shame that burned my face as I read my schedule for the week, seeing this consult that no one else at the treatment center mentioned as part of his or her regimen of recovery.

The therapist recommended as part of after care that I attend S.L.A.A. meetings. CODA was good, but I really needed to make it to a meeting of sex and love addicts. Even at that time, it had not sunk in that my every thought and action was run by this addiction. I attended my first S.L.A.A. meeting – which just so happened to focus on withdrawal. I was suffering through the intense symptoms of withdrawal, barely able to breathe or make eye contact and heard the characteristics of a sex and love addict. I thought, “Wow, I am home.”

The shares of my fellows that night only reinforced that I had finally found a group of people who think just the same as me. I found myself nodding in famili-

arity with share after share, and I knew to my core that I was home. It was a feeling I had never known before. In the meetings I attended, the S.L.A.A. text I read, and conversations with fellows and my sponsor, I found an explanation that resonated in my heart for every crazy thought and action I've ever had.

A new understanding was revealed to me about each failed, toxic relationship and sexual liaison I could and could not remember. And most importantly, I had a reference for each self-destructive and obsessive thought and action that permeated my being. I was deep in the throes of withdrawal, but at least I had a guide provided by the countless others who had gone before me.

Support was given to me at every turn as I shared my misery and pain with my fellows at each S.L.A.A. meeting. The community and fellowship alone could be proof that sex and love addiction is real. I had never felt something more real than the belonging I felt in the Augustine Fellowship — strangers reaching out to support someone they had never met before but identified in the same disease.

However, there was a greater proof of this addiction. The Steps' suggestion of connecting to a Higher Power convinced me

the only peace I could find would be through a God of my understanding. I had previously never connected to this source, but through days and weeks of endless praying, often as simple as repeating, "Please God restore me to sanity," hundreds of times an hour in an attempt to save myself from my addict brain, I finally felt the connection to my Higher Power which brought with it such peace and love that I had never known.

A couple months later, as I reflect back on this experience, still feeling the effects of withdrawal, I wish that peace and love from my Higher Power could be summoned upon demand. The clinical major depression is still heavy as I do my best to reintegrate into my life, but I do find moments of peace and serenity at my daily S.L.A.A. meeting. Sex and love addiction is a real disease that I struggle with whether awake or asleep. It permeates radio, television, and movies, so the reminders of my obsession are hard to avoid.

I used this addiction to self-medicate the depression, and therefore I now have two demons to battle that feed off each other, both wanting to kill me. I know this is real because it is my life. As hopeless as it feels, my Higher Power continues to give me messages that it will get better. I won't give up before the miracle happens.

—AMANDA

Addiction Deeply Damaged My Soul



I am learning that sex and love addiction is real on a daily basis. I came to “S” programs in 2001, and eventually found

S.L.A.A. shortly before my last bottom in 2009.

That first exposure to “S” recovery pierced the darkness and

was the first shock to my system.

It made me realize that the progression of the disease had taken me into frighteningly addictive territory. I compromised my values in ways that I never thought I would, and placed my health at risk and deeply damaged my soul.

I was like a deer in the headlights when I saw my history in such stark relief. In those early years, I tried to stay sober and had up and down results.

Half of the time I was trying to stay sober on my own efforts, and the other half of the time was willfully acting out in my farthest bottom line behaviors.

I had not yet gained what I have heard called “the gift of desperation,” that ultimate crushing of the spirit that causes one to lose all hope in their previous way of life and leads one to cling to the lifesaver of recovery with the tenacity of a drowning soul.

Today I have 42 months sober from call girls, prostitutes, strippers, pornography, and masturbation. On a side note — I can not engage in masturbation since I always used it in the past in tan-

dem with pornography and objectifying women.

Once crossing this threshold, it is not a far leap for me to start paying for things and using others, which to me are the most addictive, unmanageable, and emotionally scarring acting out behaviors.

However with 42 months off bottom lines, it still sneaks up on me that I am still a sex and love addict.

I’ll find myself taking double looks in public and objectifying women; I’ll linger on sexual fantasies of the past or think of what I might do if I were to go back to deep

bottom-line addictive behavior.

These are serious middle line areas for me. When I am faced with them, I pray very specifically to my Higher Power that I need him to take them away because once the arousal has created an emotional hit, I am powerless over them.

Yes, I became aware every day that I am a sex and love addict, but there is power in claiming powerlessness and there is power in rejecting the old lifestyle one day at a time.

— D.B.

There is power in claiming powerlessness and there is power in rejecting the old lifestyle one day at a time.

Addiction Is Definitely Real



Photo by James E.

I don't know if ever I thought that sex addiction was not real. I don't know if I ever really thought about it. I knew it was real for me when a prostitute and a therapist told me I might be an addict and I sort of knew already. But then I began a concerted effort to stop on my own. I put all my effort into it. The closest I got was switching addictions to legitimate massage.

But then the frequency increased. What was once weekends became multiple times during the week, and driving over forty miles one way to get there. Addiction is real.

It exists. Addiction to sex and love is like any other addiction,

it's just that the substance is sex and love.

Ultimately, in my recovery, I discovered the disease was not real. Referring to the old acronym F.E.A.R. (False Evidence Appearing Real) — self-centered fear is at the root of my dis-ease.

This is sort of a paradox. Addiction is real for me because I am an addict. When I pull apart my 4th Step, I see that all the fears driving the addiction are not real. It is my believing in them that make them real. In my disease I end up taking the action that proves the disease to be real. I act out and reprove the belief about myself that I am

broken, and then the cycle begins again.

The same is true for my Higher Power. If I believe in the God of my understanding, He is real for me. If I do not believe, He is not there for me and the disease fills the void. Today I simply choose to believe in a power greater than myself and as I do I cease to believe the lies. And I am living in the sometimes

uncomfortable truth by doing the actions of the program, working the 12 Steps and being of service, imperfectly — one more day. I do not truly understand the addiction. Of course, I truly do not understand the solution. And maybe trying to understand something I am not capable of understanding is part of the problem.

— JOHN B

A Slip Is A Slip

I know that Sex Addiction is real because I just had a slip after my longest period of sobriety of three and a half years. I slipped on a small time bottom line, but in working a truly honest program, a slip is a slip. I didn't see a prostitute, I didn't spend a night in a strip bar. But I did find myself seeking out arousing "less-than-pornographic" images on my smart phone, and wound up masturbating.

The addiction took me places I didn't want to go; my hand trembled uncontrollably as I flipped through the pictures.

I was fully aware that this constituted relapse, but compulsively, I continued down this dark path that is a gateway to

my most outrageous behaviors.

After this moment of acting out, all worthless ten minutes of it, I was consumed with guilt and fear. I told the people I knew I had to tell, and was loved and counseled to get back on the horse and take it easy on myself.

In a way, the very fact that people were telling me "the solution" made it clear that there does exist a problem, and that problem is called sex and love addiction.

Today, on day six of sobriety, I can see how this slip has been positive in a way. I didn't hide and continue acting out, when in the past I would have hid. I saw that with three and a half years of sobriety I was not bullet proof.

I have had the affirming support of others; I have also had the opportunity to feel that

this is still difficult for me to receive. I have the opportunity to engage in Step Eleven more to increase my conscious contact with my Higher Power, a Step

that I have been struggling with for more than four months. And maybe I'll have greater gratitude and surrender and see things as one day at a time.

— ANONYMOUS, CALIFORNIA

No Longer A Vague Idea Of What I'm Powerless Over

I can't pinpoint one moment when I realized sex and love addiction was real because I don't believe it happened in one instance. For me, the addiction's realness shares itself with me in phases, a continual reminder presented to me to ensure my familiarity with its realness. It occurs just as often as the ocean waves meet the shore.

One of my first moments of seeing that the addiction is real came from hitting my bottom and sitting in my first meeting. Every person in the meeting looked quite normal... I am not sure what I expected to see.

Perhaps ex-pimps and former porn stars? Whatever I imagined, it wasn't that. Sitting in a room with these "normal" looking people, I listened as best I could once the meeting commenced. After hearing the reading of the



characteristics and the shares it seemed undeniable to me that my life was in bondage to something very, very real indeed.

People shared things about their lives that rang true of mine as well but they were things I would never dream of saying out loud, especially to a group! They shared without abandon, and,

from what I could pick up on, without shame. Furthermore, they shared that program is what brought them to their acceptance of their addiction and this freed them to share about their struggle. If each person in the room experienced the dark, unspeakable things that made up my life, I had to believe I was not alone and what we (what I) faced was a true reality – addiction itself.

There were multiple layers to grasping the concept of the realness of my addiction. One of these layers was sheer exposure to the language used in the rooms and literature. I mean, the language expressed my experience precisely. I had to believe that if there was a term for it, I was not unique in experiencing it. I no longer had the luxury of living with a vague idea of what I was powerless over; it was there in front of me, in black and white, clear as day. This awareness left me with feelings of relief and terror. I finally know what this pain is... but how will I ever find a way out?

One of the most devastating yet greatest gifts of realization was a toxic relationship I got into after being in program for two months. I was not done acting out at that point and dated a man on and off over the course of six months. I affectionately refer to

this phase of my recovery as “finding the basement of rock bottom.”

During the relationship I continued to work with my sponsor, went to meetings, and utilized the tools of program. Through that relationship I saw first hand, in real time, the powerlessness I had.

I had a growing awareness that I couldn't NOT act out... I couldn't NOT answer the phone when he called... I couldn't NOT see him. I would go to a meeting, hear shares about the toxic nature of addictive relationships, and then experience the toxicity of my own relationship later that night nearly word for word. Drinking to numb my pain while in his presence, calling fellows sobbing at 2am after discovering he was acting out outside of the relationship with multiple women yet again, and still not being able to leave. That was my reality, my reminder. While that relationship ended with a great deal of pain, I could not have had a better lesson in reinstating that my addiction was real.

After that, the addiction's reality came to me when full-fledged withdrawal hit. The big book talks about the anguish and pain of withdrawal and expresses the experience to a T. If addiction wasn't real then why was my physical, emotional, and

psychological response so intense? In my outreach calls to others I was told time and time again, “If you’re in pain and discomfort it means that recovery is working and you’re doing it right. The only way past is through.”

I was reminded of the promises of our program, which are also real, when I came out of withdrawal and experienced relief and hope. The obsession had lifted and I was able to look back and see the insanity and unmanageability of my past. While the “white-knuckling” aspect of my addiction isn’t something I commonly experience anymore, I am under no notion that I am cured. I still struggle with triggers, addictive wants, and fantasy. The reality of addiction is in my conscious awareness now, which is why I still identify at meetings.

I think that’s the beauty of why people identify themselves as addicts in meetings regardless of their sobriety time. I’ve never heard someone say, “I’m so-and-so and I used to be a sex and love addict but now I just come to these meetings for fun.”

No. Each person who has struggled through the relentless fight and eventual acceptance of their addiction identifies. No true addict is above his or her addiction. We have all come to see the mind-altering nature, the realness, of sex and love addiction.

The story doesn’t end with sitting in that reality, though. There is hope, beauty, and renewal on the other side of all the awareness that releases us into being the best possible versions of ourselves.

— SARAH, LOS ANGELES

An Invitation For You

Enhance 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/contact/jeditor>

There Has To Be More Than This

I first became aware of sex and love addiction because the pain I was experiencing at the time was such that I felt like “there has to be more to life than this.”

I found S.L.A.A. through an internet search. Years later, after going to another program, my sponsor in that program suggested I go to S.L.A.A. I broke down in tears, thinking, “you mean...there’s really something wrong with me?”

Sounds dramatic, but it felt like a big deal at the time. As I continue to go to S.L.A.A. meetings, and talk to people, sex and love addiction slowly becomes more and more real and less and less like a big, scary monster.

My friend, who also goes to another program, told me when I first started my journey in S.L.A.A., “this stuff is real.” Now, S.L.A.A. seems like more of a well-kept secret that helps so many people be free from their addictive patterns of sex and love behaviors. I’m so grateful my Higher Power brought me back to S.L.A.A. because even though the initial pain was real enough for me to discover S.L.A.A., the fear held me back from going to



meetings. Underneath that fear, was willingness and surrender.

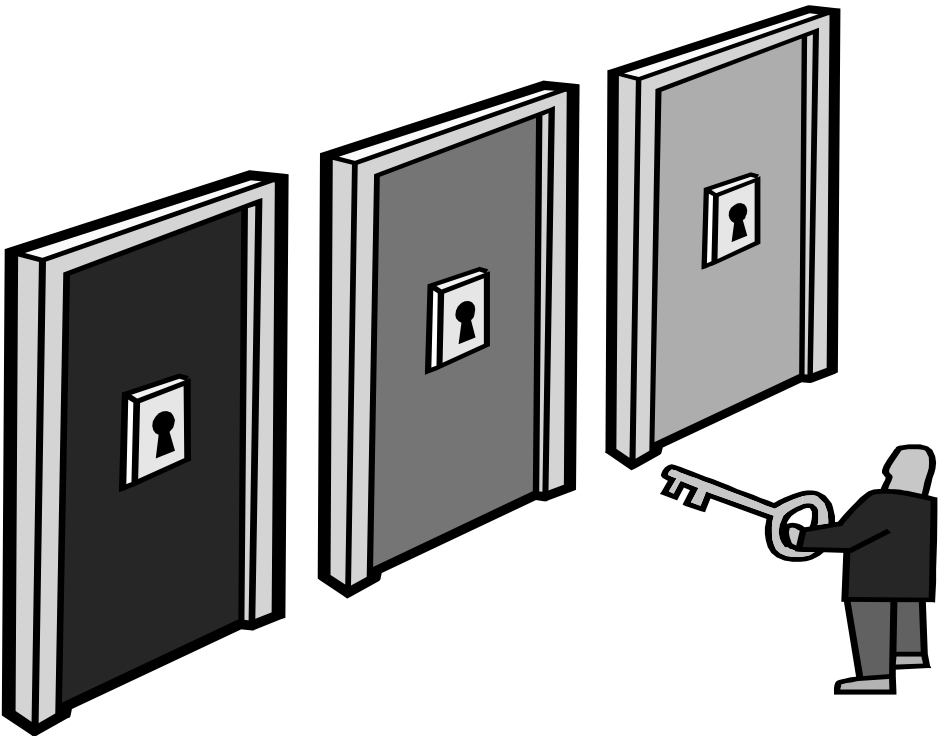
I only needed a nudge from a trusted servant in my other program to uncover the willingness, discover, surrender, and discard my fear. And now I continue on this fact-finding and fact-facing process, discovering the twists and turns in my thinking that have patterned and conditioned my sex and love addiction.

Through meditation, I get to go within and be present for my thoughts without trying to fix or hide or contain them, but simply letting them be, and then I can talk to my fellows about my thinking and ideas instead of acting on them or becoming a slave to my emotions.

— ANONYMOUS

Share space

Finally, I Choose Me



I am the oldest child of a dysfunctional family, the product of an unhappy union between two abused adults, practically children themselves when they married. My father was

born to an alcoholic father and mother who had 12 children. As a young man, he dropped out of high school to join the Army.

My father dabbled in marijuana and other drugs, and eventually became an alcoholic, himself. My mother endured her own difficult childhood, as the single adopted child of alcoholics. So, it seems my parents were drawn together by their shared misery.

Ah, yes, the first man I ever loved and fell in love with was my father. But he was also the first man to break my heart. No one was more handsome than my daddy; no one was as smart, funny or resourceful.

And no one could cook like him. He even knew how to sew! But my father was away from home for months at a stretch. By the time he returned to civilian life, I was seven years old and completely enamored with him. However, the daddy of my dreams was left behind. The man who came back to us was angry, morose and volatile. To deal with the pressures of life, my father turned to alcohol every day.

His after-work routine consisted of buying a few large bottles of beer and spending the rest of the night drinking them. In the meantime, he ranted

about his lot in life and I was his favorite captive audience. Maybe it was because he knew that I still adored him, longing for the fantasy father he once represented. From the age of eight, I was forced to sit at the dining room table for hours at a time, listening to my father curse and complain about everything and everyone, including my mother.

When I appeared inattentive for any reason, he threatened to hurt me or resorted to calling me names and belittling me. Out of fear, my mother never intervened.

Instead, I was left to face my father alone and I walled myself off in an attempt to protect my young, impressionable mind and my fragile ego. Mentally, I travelled to distant places and moments in time where I felt safe and happy. Everybody loved me and I was accepted just as I was. I created my own fantasy world because the one I inhabited was too painful to bear.

The real world was filled with chaos, strife, terror and utter loneliness. I never felt like I belonged to my family at all. I often imagined that I had been separated from my real family — my perfect family — and they

were out there waiting for me.

Ironically, thanks to my mother, no one could have guessed our existence was so hellish. My sister and I attended mass regularly and participated in other activities in and out of school. We were altar servers, we sang in the choir and we were girl scouts.

To everyone who knew us, we seemed to be a normal family. But that was never the truth. I hated myself for taking part in the lie, for smiling when I felt like crying, and for pretending everything was alright. I was helpless and hopeless. I couldn't reach out to anyone — not my extended family, my priest, my teachers or my friends — because I was afraid that my parents, especially my father, would find out.

Meanwhile, my self-loathing manifested itself in intrusive, negative thoughts and ritualistic masturbation. The pay-off for my behavior was two-fold: I used it to both soothe and punish myself. I could turn to masturbation any time I felt unloved, neglected, lonely, frustrated, sad or angry.

I even concocted a fictitious organization in my mind that required me only to masturbate to maintain my membership. It

made me feel like I was finally part of something, with no criticism, rejection or condemnation of any kind.

As I entered my teenage years, I discovered another way to fill the emotional void that I felt and also a way to perpetuate my fantasies. My first romantic relationship initiated a lifelong cycle of obsessive love affairs, followed by periods of unbridled promiscuity. I was almost 15 when I met my first boyfriend at a summer camp.

He seemed shy, awkward, and a bit withdrawn. I sought him out and introduced myself after learning from another camper that he was interested in me. Yes, he was, and so began an on-and-off relationship that lasted for eight years.

I wrote him love letters every day, drafted a dating contract for him, and practiced hyphenating my last name with his. I fantasized about us getting married, having children and growing old together.

Over time, I would discover that the boy who inhabited my romantic dreams really wasn't him. The young man I was dating criticized my looks, my intelligence, my family and my friends. He didn't like what I said to others when he was in

earshot and he would critique my performance at the earliest opportunity. And he took advantage of everything I had to give, including my money, my work and my time.

Looking back, I felt pity for my boyfriend because he was two grades behind me. His stepfather was an alcoholic and I empathized with him. I wanted to rescue him with my love, to bolster his confidence and self-esteem. I needed to feel needed.

Despite my friends' and family's protests, we dated until I left for graduate school. Before that, no matter how many times I strayed from the relationship, I felt compelled to go back to him.

Surprisingly, my first sexual experience was at age 17 with a boy I barely knew. The encounter left me feeling confused and shameful about my sexuality, reaffirming the messages my parents — namely, my father — had given me about sex as I entered puberty.

Sex was a dirty thing that could only bring me disease and unwanted pregnancy. There was nothing good about it. The only thing that mattered was holding on to my virginity and it was gone. I was nothing and nobody special anymore.

During my college years, I

engaged in casual sex with numerous men, sometimes unprotected. I didn't discriminate and I didn't insist on using condoms or other contraceptives.

In the summer after my freshman year, I was attacked and beaten by a sex partner during an argument, and I landed in the hospital for a few days with mono. Later, I had to testify against him in court, after receiving anonymous threats for six months, and it was humiliating.

His defense attorney labeled me "the campus whore" and tried to assert that I provoked the violence. But I had cultivated a bad reputation at school, though, and I made few friends because of it. I couldn't even join a sorority.

Yet, in spite of the drama, I still maintained my double life. I excelled in my studies, held onto my scholarships and participated in extracurricular activities like student judiciary and senior class council. I graduated with a solid GPA, earning both my bachelor's and master's degrees by the time I was 23.

As a grad student, I met my second serious boyfriend. He was completing his MBA after a four-year stint in the Army and

though it wasn't love at first sight, he grew on me.

A born-again Christian and admitted sex addict, he was adamant about staying celibate until marriage. But, in Jamaica on vacation, we had sex for the first time and that was the end of his ideals.

Our three and a half-year relationship was an intense one. We fought constantly and then we made up passionately.

But somewhere along the way, we began to fight more than we made up, and what started with a heated exchange of words often ended with verbal assaults and physical abuse. I threw things at him, he put me out of his car. I slapped him, and he dragged me down a flight of stairs. That last episode led to our final breakup over 10 years ago. We had parted once before, but sex led us back to each other.

After that relationship ended, I travelled back onto the promiscuous path. I was suffering from the loss of a boyfriend whom I thought would be my husband; I no longer had my bearings.

I suddenly felt disoriented

because I didn't really develop any friendships or other supports when I moved to Maryland after grad school. My ex was my connection to the people I had met. They were really his family, his friends and his associates — not mine. And I hadn't joined an organization or participated in any ongoing activities.

What started with a heated exchange of words often ended with verbal assaults and physical abuse.

Unconsciously, I had abandoned my goals of defining my own identity and creating my own life as a young adult in a new place.

Facing this reality alone for the first time, I resumed my pattern of having sex with almost any man who showed interest and suited my tastes at the time.

This included a guy in my workplace, a pot-smoking older Ph.D. student and a middle-aged married man with two children. In particular, the short-lived extramarital affair that I engaged in carried some serious risks. It distracted me from my work responsibilities, as my married lover worked in the same building.

I would spend hours away from my desk, sneaking down to his office or driving out to a

public place with him. I also left work early some days to rendezvous with him at my apartment. If my supervisor had noticed, I surely would have been disciplined or fired.

Coincidentally, I met my first husband while I was in the midst of my sophomore foray into the world of sex without conscience, responsibility or commitment. I needed to escape that world, and another monogamous relationship provided the perfect opportunity.

Twelve years older than me, he was coming out of a 13-year relationship. And he was also a child of divorce and had an alcoholic mother. My parents divorced when I was 21, so I was no stranger to it and of course, we thought our marriage would be different than the relationship our parents had. Ours probably was, but it still dissolved.

We married after dating for two years and again, I became obsessed with the need to feel needed. He brought to our marriage 12 years of unfiled tax returns, bad credit and a judgment for auto insurance fraud.

I came to his rescue, paying an accountant to file the

returns, helping him pay all the interest, fines and penalties, and getting the judgment removed so he could get auto insurance. I also helped my husband repair his credit rating and get a promotion at work.

For the first few years, I reveled in being my husband's savior. He called me his angel and lavished me with gratitude and appreciation.

But as our marriage progressed, I saw him as a burden and I pushed him to assume more of a leadership role in our home. And he started to resent me for making demands on him. When we first met, I didn't set any expectations. My husband-to-be was yet another fascinating project for me, someone I could mold into what I wanted.

In return, I received loyalty, marital status and the prospect of children. Now I was asking him to fulfill my fantasies, to be what he wasn't. And that was a strong, successful and confident man. The man I married — my real husband — was an alcoholic who suffered from chronic depression and low self-esteem.

After five and a half years, our marriage ended in divorce, heartbreak and despair for both of us. So, feeling abandoned, disillusioned and severely

disappointed with being single and childless, I embarked on two years of living dangerously.

I tried to surround myself with positivity, joining a church and spending more time with family and friends. And I lost 85 pounds through diet and exercise. But these things only proved to be distractions. I never allowed myself to grieve the pain of my loss. Five months after my husband left, feeling slender and confident, I hit the online dating scene.

It was a feast for my sexual addiction. My first date ended with a one-night stand and I spent the entire year hooking up with men I met on the dating site. Some of the encounters lasted longer than others, but they all evaporated as I grew tired of each man or he was done with me.

Also, during this time, I coveted other men who crossed my path, including my personal trainer, my golf classmate, a guy I met at a birthday party and a man who worked out at my gym. The brief fling with my personal trainer is most memorable. I lost my own company's first and only contract because I became so obsessed with him that I totally neglected my work.

By late 2011, after enduring a medical crisis and finally breaking things off with the

longest-lasting of my online liaisons, I resolved to be celibate until I could be part of a monogamous relationship.

I had tried months earlier, to no avail, but I was determined to make it this time. However, I hadn't reached rock-bottom in my sex and love addiction yet. Well, I didn't even know I was an addict, but I did suspect that I had a problem. And so I met my second husband on a social media site in early January of this year.

He was charming, affable and affectionate, declaring his love for me only two weeks after we met. I abandoned my common sense and ignored my instincts because, although I never really loved him, I fell in love with the idea of him. For me, he represented the renewed possibility of achieving my ultimate fantasy. I would finally have the perfect husband, the lasting marriage and the beautiful children I've always desired.

Although our early encounters took the form of emails and online chat sessions, we eventually spoke on the phone and used Skype for virtual dates. My romantic obsession took on a life of its own, and my love addiction possessed me. I couldn't eat or sleep.

I barely completed my work assignments because I spent my days chatting with my newfound love or daydreaming about him.

But it really wasn't him that I wanted, it was the fantasy. And soon, my experiences would confirm that.

On the first of February, barely a month into the relationship, I travelled to Florida and met my then-boyfriend. Despite some misgivings and last-minute jitters, I decided to follow through on our plan to move him to Maryland with me.

Although all of the warning flags were there — he lived on scarce resources and had little to offer me — I again acted on my need to be needed. And the sex only encouraged my addictive behavior. So, after being stranded in South Carolina for two days with hardly any money, we arrived at my home.

A week later, we married and settled into connubial bliss. But it didn't take long for the fantasy to begin unraveling. My new husband turned out to be an opportunist who lied, hid the truth, rationalized his actions and became very defensive when confronted.

Ten days later, I received an email from a woman claiming to be his ex-girlfriend and stating my husband owed her a large sum of money. He denied any romantic relationship with her. Over the next three months, I

would discover that my second husband is the sole provider for his immediate family back in Africa and he has a child whom he never revealed to me. Truly, this marriage would be my most painful, confusing and costly relationship to date.

After months of dramatic ups and downs, I started feeling desperate and I wanted to end the marriage. I was on the edge of madness for the first time in my life. No longer fantasizing about my perfect spouse, I distrusted and despised my husband.

My thoughts revolved around removing this man from my life. And I was overwhelmed by my wifely duties. I cooked, cleaned, did laundry and transported my husband to and from work. At first, it was my pleasure to do everything. I wanted to show him that he had indeed married a woman of virtue who could handle anything that was thrown at her.

And I did this, to my own detriment. I fell behind on my work responsibilities and my supervisor called me out on my poor performance. Financially, I struggled to pay my husband's debts, support his family and still make ends meet. I even began to gain weight because I was eating differently and missing workouts. I also distanced myself from my

family and friends, believing most of them disapproved of my marriage, even though they'd never met my husband.

Due to our short courtship and seemingly whirlwind romance, I chose to lie to them about how long we dated before marrying and the circumstances of how we met. Deep down inside, I knew they would think I was delusional and I was afraid to admit the truth to myself — that my decision to marry a man I'd only known for six weeks was indeed pure insanity.

By mid-June, I had broached the topic of separation with my husband twice. On the third occasion, he decided to go, abruptly packing his belongings and leaving in the middle of the night. I suffered a miscarriage 10 days later and my job was threatened by a series of unexcused absences that I took to accompany my husband to doctor's visits.

This second husband project had ended badly. Once again, I rescued a man for the sake of fulfilling my own needs. I had relocated him, helped him to secure employment, to get his GED and to resolve his medical issues. And I paid his debts. I thought he would be loyal, committed and grateful to me.

But he wasn't. None of that mattered anymore. My life was shattered and it was time to pick up the pieces.

After the sudden separation and my miscarriage, I started journaling and reflecting on what happened. As I wrote my thoughts and feelings, I uncovered a pervasive pattern of negative, destructive relationships with men.

In fact, I learned that I've never had a healthy relationship with a man. Somehow, by the grace of God, I knew that I needed professional help to identify the source of my behavior and learn new ways of meeting my own needs and of relating to other people from a state of wholeness.

I found a wonderful counselor who diagnosed me as a love addict. With that revelation, I did some research on love addiction and came across the S.L.A.A. website and the 40-question survey. At first, I didn't want to admit that I'm also a sex addict because it seemed more acceptable to be a love addict. But I followed through and began attending meetings.

Now, I'm working with a different counselor to address my codependence issues and addictions to sex and love. And I

am very blessed to have not one, but five sponsors: God, my program sponsor, my service sponsor, my therapist and myself.

I am reaching out to recovery partners, too, for experience, strength and hope. My personal recovery program also includes working the 12 Steps, performing service, committing to top line behaviors, going to S.L.A.A. and Codependents Anonymous meetings, participating in an Adult Children of Alcoholics group, and attending a divorce

grief class.

I recently joined a church, and I also want to take cooking and nutrition classes. For at least the next year or two, I'm focused on living a sober, celibate life — no dating — and just getting to know myself. I will love and care for myself, I will learn what God truly has planned for me and I will break my lifelong cycle of romantic obsession and sexual promiscuity. After many years of choosing to be with anybody but myself, finally, I choose me.

— YANA N.

Facing My Fears

For some 35 years, I have hid behind love to escape my fears — my fears of failure, abandonment, loss and, most of all, loneliness.

With the 12-Steps as my solid foundation, I am in an open field now... vulnerably naked... no lover to obsess upon so that I might escape from myself.

Addiction is just that — whether through alcohol, drugs, sex, food, gambling, love or co-dependency — it is our avenue of escape. To let go of that which has served to keep us from our

fears is nothing short of jumping off a cliff — a leap of faith. You, my fellows, know of what I speak.

We are standing in our aloneness now. It is not easy. Many tears. Many fears.

And yet, I am so deeply grateful to say that since taking my last swig of the sweet elixir of addictive love, my profound sense of gratitude is continually growing and strengthening.

From the depths of my soul, I thank God that I am finally, FINALLY, strong enough to face that which I have so greatly feared... myself.

— KIM K.

Help Carry the message

the Journal

2014 Calendars are here!



the Journal Calendars are 12-month wall calendars (size: 8.5" x 11") with inspirational excerpts from *the Journal* and they are available for \$10 at the F.W.S. store –www.slaafws.org

The *Journal* calendar can be used:

- To celebrate *the Journal*, our meeting in a magazine
- To let other S.L.A.A. members know about *the Journal*
- As an incentive to subscribe to *the Journal*

What you can do:

- Buy a calendar for yourself to support FWS and *the Journal*
- Vote to sell *the Journal* calendar at your Intergroup or meeting literature table and let people know what it is
- Give away a calendar as an incentive to subscribe to *the Journal*

All proceeds benefit F.W.S.



Meditation Book Project

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT: A WORD TO CREATIVE CONTRIBUTORS: FEEL FREE TO SUBMIT UNCOPYRIGHTED, ORIGINAL WRITING (WITH THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT S.L.A.A.-FWS, INC. MAY FREELY EDIT, COMBINE, DECLINE, OR REASSIGN MATERIAL) TO BE PUBLISHED AS: 1. PERSONAL SHARES FOR MEDITATIONS (MAX. 350 CHARACTER COUNT INCLUDING SPACES). 2. POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS/ PRAYERS (MAX. 100 CHARACTER COUNT INCLUDING SPACES). 3. SOURCED QUOTES FROM S.L.A.A. CONFERENCE-APPROVED LITERATURE (MAX. 120 CHARACTER COUNT INCLUDING SPACES). FOR NOW, PLEASE EMAIL SHARES (RELEASING COPYRIGHT) TO JOURNALOUTREACH@GMAIL.COM AND/OR THE CLC CHAIR WWW.SLAAFWS.ORG/CONTACT/CLC

WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal is a painful process. It seems that when in the grips of withdrawal, the Universe opens up with possibilities of ways to slip back into that familiar way of life we know as addiction and not face the gut wrenching experience. In the beginning, I went to S.L.A.A. meetings and heard people describe their pain as they were withdrawing from Sex and Love addiction. They also described the heart-breaking experience of breaking their bottom-line behaviors during withdrawal. I didn't really understand what they meant until it was my turn.

AFFIRMATION: Higher Power, Please help me do the things necessary to stay sober throughout my withdrawal. Help me to remember to go to S.L.A.A. meetings and to develop a healthy support system.

THE INSPIRATION LINE

YOUR 24/7 SPONSOR

215-574-2120

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 inspire Sex and Love Addicts?



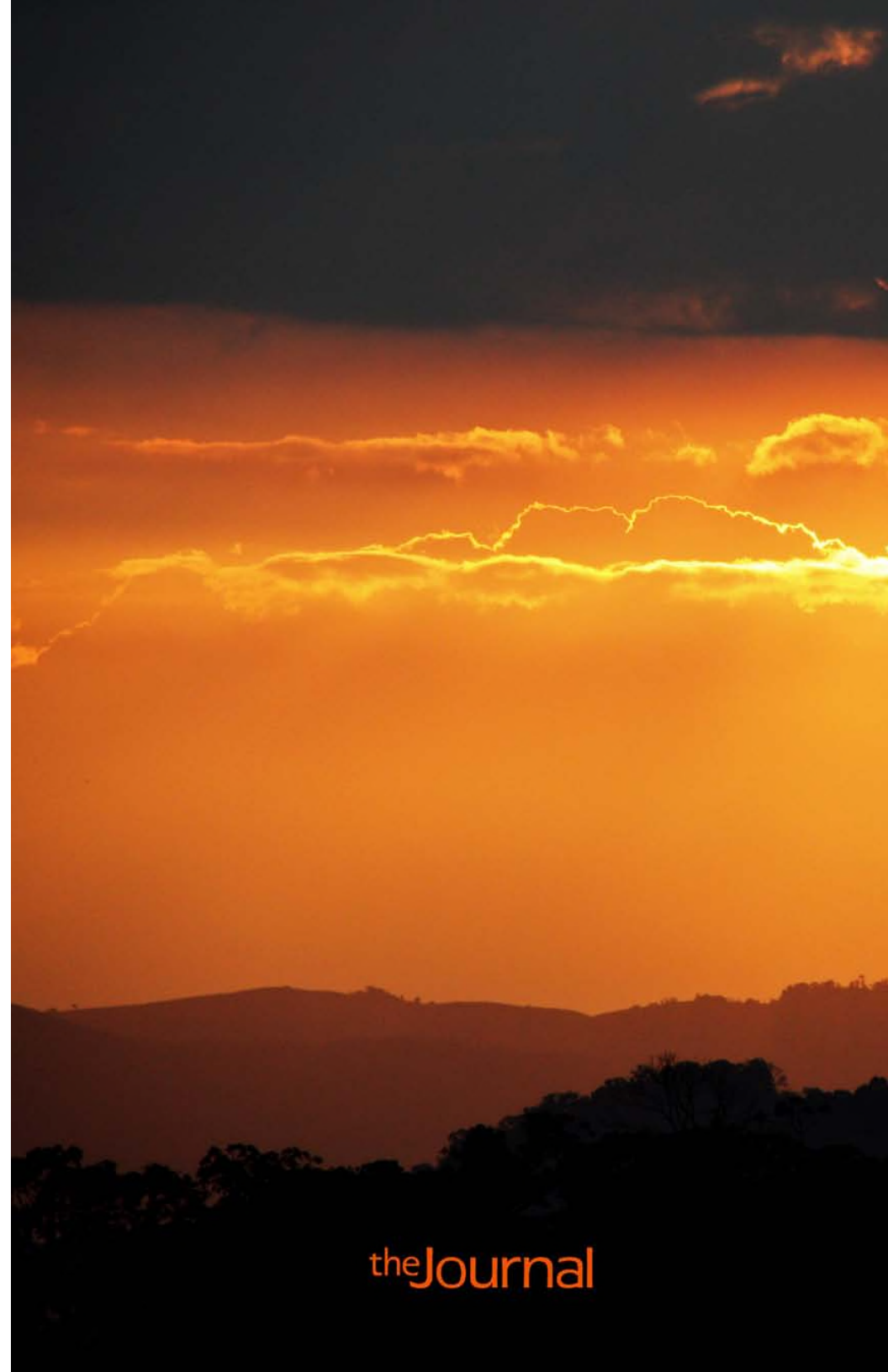
▶ **How we help.....**

- 87,741 calls have come into the line since 2006, that translates to 12,534 calls per year, 35 calls per day or 1.65 calls per hour, every hour !
- Calls come from all over the world! 50% from the east coast, 15% from the west coast, 20% from the mid-west 10% from Florida, 4% from New England and even Hawaii !
- Our busiest day is Thanksgiving and there is never a busy signal, so you will get through to receive inspiring thoughts !
- The Inspiration Line has been in existence for 27 years!

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.

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.



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