



the Journal

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Setting Bottom Lines

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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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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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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Letter From the Editor

Dear Reader,

When I began S.L.A.A., I had only two bottom lines on my list: 1. No violent, dangerous or risky sex (risk of pregnancy or STDs) and 2. no sex outside of a committed relationship.

Later, when I realized I had a problem with pornography, I added that to the list. My second sponsor in S.L.A.A. had me add: watch flirting and predatory behavior – If I'm really mindful and checking my motives, I don't do either of those behaviors. Should they be on my bottom line? Maybe, because I have found that once I had my spiritual experience I haven't done them in my 15 years of sobriety.

I know they are empty promises for me and the other person. I don't intend on breaking my bottom line of "no sex outside a committed relationship (my marriage)." But the Setting Bottom Lines pamphlet calls them accessory behaviors, which is why my sponsor said to notice them rather than saying I would lose my time if I engaged in them. She didn't want to set me up for failure and shame.

I realize that that can be dangerous for some individuals and that accessory behaviors need to be bottom lines in some instances. I think each individual can decide with their Higher Power and their sponsor. Self care is key.

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.

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Question of the Day

& Answers from Yesterday

PLEASE SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE STRENGTH AND HOPE AROUND SETTING BOTTOM LINES.

Setting bottom lines has been a transformative part of my program. I was hesitant and resistant in early recovery to set and follow them. I looked for excuses and justifications to break them. Resisting those urges and learning to feel my feelings and sit through discomfort has been a cornerstone of my recovery. I am so grateful to my fellows and the whole S.L.A.A. program!

— **Danielle, West Hollywood, CA**

In my 12-Step program experience, setting bottom lines is unique to S.L.A.A. For me, my bottom lines relate to setting boundaries in specific ways. Repeating a bottom line in meetings keeps that behavior change in my daily awareness.

— **Nancy G., San Diego**

Setting (defining) bottom lines gave me clarity around what behaviors were damaging to me and others.

— **David F., Poland**

I listened to fellows' definitions of bottom lines. I am primarily a romance and relationship (love) addict. I have 18 years in program. In the initial years, I only heard men talk about sex addiction. Now, I have more support for my bottom lines around love addiction. It's harder for me to set and see when my love addiction bottom lines are being broken. I constantly need to ask peers where I am at with my love addict bottom lines.

— **Dion, Orinda, CA**

Newcomers often wonder what should be on their bottom line. They can be confused about what it means. I tell them "Whatever behavior brought you in the room."

— **David B., Worcester, MA**

My bottom lines are easy to see. They are the behaviors that I am or that I quickly become powerless over. The ones that get away from me and make my life unmanageable.

— **Tim C., Cincinnati, OH**

I try to avoid all bottom line triggers with attention to people, places, and activities. I make calls, go to meetings and reach out when triggered by bottom lines. And most of all, I try not to cross boundaries.

— **Joseph A., Philadelphia**

The trick for me was simple: Change people, places and things around my bottom lines.

— **Michael S., Philadelphia**

Talked these things out with my sponsor, looked at what were the behaviors that got me into trouble and how I used acting out to manage my emotions.

— **Andrew E., Pittsburg, PA**

The Question of the Day from the last issue was, “Please share your experience strength and hope around setting bottom lines.” Here are some wonderful responses for your enjoyment. They are not presented in any particular order. The next two questions are: #165 Letting Go of the Outcome: Easier Said Than Done. — Describe your process of “letting go” of strong desires or important outcomes. — The deadline for submissions is Jan. 15, 2017; and #166 — Thirteenth Stepping — How do you recognize/avoid “thirteenth stepping.” Please share your experience strength and hope. — The deadline for submissions is March 15, 2017. Please send answers to www.slaafws.org.

The series of failed, destructive relationships that I participated in did a good job of setting my bottom line around that behavior.

— **Jason S., Sacramento**

Unmanageability and humility! If I had set my bottom lines without input, I am sure I would have left off some things due to denial. Get with a sober, experienced member.

— **Steve B., Sunrise, FL**

My bottom lines began as no contact with my qualifier, no surfing dating apps and no sex outside committed, monogamous relationship. They remain that to this day and they are how I know I maintain sobriety.

— **Amy G., Austin, TX**

Originally, my recovery buddy in Singapore edited and gave me my bottom lines based on my ideas- thank God, as I was incapable of honesty at that time. Later, as I felt more “recovered” I realized that if I didn’t keep revising and adding things with my sponsor, my bottom lines would be less effective as they didn’t reflect the current me that had grown and changed in S.L.A.A. recovery.

— **Trevor G., Seattle**

I could only see the graphic, mainly physical bottom lines at first. As it’s been said, “We know only a little more will be revealed.” A sponsor, step work and working with others have revealed in sharper form what emotional sobriety may look like.

— **Anthony, Chicago**

Make them something you can reasonably maintain. They can always be added to. They are an evolving process.

— **Anne K., Tampa**

Bottom lines keeps me away from my diseased thinking, feeling and actions.

— **Danette, Seminole, FL**

I revisit my bottom lines every 6 months. I start brainstorming them on my own, then ask for feedback from my sponsor and at least 3 program friends.

— **Sarah C., San Antonio**

Setting my bottom lines was a process that included working the 40 questions with a sponsor over a period of a few months. It built trust and I thoroughly saw a powerless pattern that paved the way to Step 1.

— **Alyse, Montreal**

I worked Step 1 with my sponsor and saw some very clear patterns of destructive behavior. Those behaviors became my bottom lines. They continue to change and evolve as my life looks different.

— **Ashly M., Houston**

Question of the Day

Bottom lines are my acting out behaviors that I try one day at a time to stay sober from. My bottom line behaviors made my life unmanageable and were compulsive. I am powerless over them and need my S.L.A.A. tools daily to abstain.

— **April, Houston**

I started by putting the behaviors that caused me insanity on my bottom line, then as my recovery progressed, I added to them anorexia bottom lines.

— **Anonymous, FL**

It has been a challenge. The way I got to comply with it was with service and meetings. I am sober today thanks to this.

— **Aulie, MA**

My judgement in setting my own bottom lines is extremely suspect. I needed a sponsor to help me after telling him my story. Over time my bottom line has expanded and broadened but it's a living document and protects me from myself.

— **Seth, Boston/Newton**

I need to have a responsibility partner to help remind me of my commitments to my bottom line. This is humility not weakness.

— **Tim P., Hollywood**

I need to identify the most troubling behaviors, why I continue to act on them and how I can avoid them.

— **Lindsey H., West Palm Beach**

I limited my bottom lines to 3 or 4. Beyond that, I felt I was setting myself up for failure. And I balanced my bottom lines with more top lines so I had positive tools to replace my addictive behaviors.

— **Liz O., Dallas, TX**

My bottom lines were all about no contact with my qualifier when I first joined. Now I have bottom lines surrounding boundaries to keep healthy relationships.

— **MaryJane B., Ft. Lauderdale, FL**

My first bottom lines were easy. They were what brought me in to the rooms. As I got sober, I learned what other behaviors affected my sobriety. All these things are done with my sponsor.

— **Rich K., Worcester, MA**

I believe, to begin, it's important to start small or start with what's possible. I began with 2 things on my bottom line and revisited my plan every 30 days to rewrite and adjust my bottom lines. As I got a better handle on my addictive behaviors, being realistic and starting small made the impossible "I'm" possible!

— **Glenn S., Los Angeles**

It's always difficult to accept reality that the addiction is bigger than only the core addiction. My mind always looks for new ways to feed my addictive part and that means my bottom line grows.

— **Maarten, the Netherlands**

Bottom lines serve as a tool to me. During this last sober year, I have done some small changes which tells me that the bottom line really is a living tool to my sobriety.

— **Gumilla, Sweden**

When I first started working the Steps with my sponsor, I wrote out a recovery plan that included my personal bottom lines. It is a clear, concrete way for me to focus on my recovery and it is also a working document so I can add bottom lines as necessary.

— **Becca M., Rhode Island**

Setting my bottom lines at the start, I feel, was extremely important as it was what initially got me through withdrawal. I suggested what bottom lines I wanted but after a discussion with my sponsor, he recommended what he thought I needed.

— **Paul T., London, UK**

Sex and love addiction can be very grey and bottom lines help me to have black and white boundaries. I change my bottom lines regularly to keep up to date with my subtle acting out behaviors. An example of one of these bottom lines is, “No intense conversations with my partner after 9p.m. at night.” This is when my crazy comes out.

— **Jaki Jo, London, UK**

I am 9 months into this program and am still struggling to hold bottom lines. I am unsure of whether they are clearly defined enough or not. I will keep talking with my sponsor and others to gain clarity and to stick to my bottom lines.

— **Jean J., Seattle, WA**

My first sponsor gave me a list of my bottom lines based on a list that he got from a recovery center. That did not work. What worked for me, and how I sponsor, is at first only setting bottom lines that are illegal or will get you in trouble with your partner. Then, we look at other behavior that leads to breaking bottom lines and determine if that should be added to the list.

— **Dave G., Los Angeles**

The first round of setting bottom lines was easy because I followed my sponsor's suggestions. The challenge comes from wanting to change them to suit my will. I have to rely on my bottom line of not lying to myself or others and confess that temptation. Not lying to myself or others is the one bottom line that has endured all renditions I've made.

— **Suzanne D., Silverlake, CA**

Keep bottom lines simple and focused on those behaviors that brought you to S.L.A.A.

— **Deb, Los Angeles**

Question of the Day

Be willing to review them as recovery changes your perspective. Be aware of cheating in definitions or loopholes.

— **Mike H., Los Angeles**

It's the starting point to continued freedom. Be specific!

— **Jackie J., Los Angeles**

When you make your powerlessness list, be ruthlessly honest. That will help you set effective bottom lines. That initial list of behavior is the root of success in setting them.

— **Tracey, Los Angeles**

Setting bottom lines began my recovery as I drew the line that kept me blaming another person for my experience of pain.

— **Jane, Los Angeles**

Update your bottom lines as you begin to see your patterns revealed more clearly in the rooms and through the Steps.

— **Rianna, Los Angeles**

I did a writing exercise comprised of 3 circles to identify my outer or top lines, middle lines, and bottom lines. It helped me to see in writing the behaviors that are healthy for me and others that aren't.

— **Beth S., Johnston, PA**

I have bottom lines according to the havoc any particular behavior has played in my life. If it's wrecked my life, or had consequences I no longer wish to pay, then I had better put it on my bottom lines.

— **Anonymous**

Bottom lines helped me to see my authentic self when I stopped acting out.

— **Anon, Valley Village, CA**

My experience is that self-honesty is the key to freedom. Some behaviors that are fine for others are triggers and self-harm for me.

— **Ali, Sylmar, CA**

The bottom lines that I followed after I got through withdrawal gave me hope that I knew how to change.

— **Elizabeth, Pasadena, CA**

Bottom lines are anything that doesn't lead to a spiritual connection/anything unhealthy for me.

— **Jessica F., Los Angeles, CA**

My bottom lines are not all expressly sexual in nature. They are behaviors that activate my brain and lead to crazy thinking.

— **Rachel M., La Verne, CA**

I set my bottom lines with my sponsor, by reflecting on my past actions and how they impact my life. The S.L.A.A. bottom line pamphlet has been a godsend as well.

— **Kai, Los Angeles, CA**

Journey of Recovery and Relapse



My name is _____, and I am a Sex and Love Addict. I first uttered those words 15 years ago. My bottom lines are masturbation, pornography, and strippers and prostitutes.

My bottom lines include masturbation because I don't believe I can uncouple it from fantasy of sexual encounters. Being an anorexic and socially withdrawn, this is a bad combination.

In 1998, I crossed the line from visual media and started seeing strippers and prostitutes. The

personal contact filled a void of relationship that had existed all of my life.

Yet because encounters were over and done with right after they happened, there were no messy strings of loving, compromising with, fighting with, or sacrificing for another person.

I was going against values that I thought I had, was underemployed and increasingly had an anger and resentment problem that interfered with my ability to respect authority.

Sobriety came after an

emotional breakdown. It came after a bender, having slept very few hours and waking up around 10 a.m. I was numb to all positive things and overwhelmed by my behavior over the past few days. I got a sponsor and started working the Steps.

By the thoroughness of my new sponsor's regimen, I saw how my previous attempts at Step Four and Five- clearing the junk- were lacking.

Previously, I had not progressed beyond Step Five, and missed on the solution side of the

equation – Steps Six through Twelve – healing of mind, relationships, and recovery sustainability.

It has been over six years since I have seen a stripper or prostitute. However, after 4-5 years of sobriety (I honestly can't remember now) I started hitting a rough patch around masturbation and pornography, and have been off and on "doing research" for a while. This is an uncomfortable fact to bring up, but I am speaking to the fact that one can struggle with relapse within recovery. As I heard in a meeting, it's a painful feeling to be acting out when you have a head full of recovery. Why am I back to acting out? Why do I find myself powerless? Why can't I just turn it off? Why do I experience all of the mental

consequences, knowing how and why they are there, and yet persist in my acting out?

I know that I have been more tempted to seek out prostitutes, crossing a line I don't want to revisit, as a result of my porn addiction. What is one to do? A Christian scripture on this topic reads "I know what I should do, but I don't do it; that which I do not want to do, I end up doing." What anguish!

What to do, then? I go to meetings and try to keep my head on straight as best I can. I try to listen to other people's solution and hope for it in my own life. I am of service at the meeting level.

I try to stay mindful of my tendencies – do I back-bite at work? Do I act kindly towards others? Do I try to adjust myself

without self-reproach? This is Step Nine – living amends – and Step Ten- constructive review of one's day.

Do I reach out to others, do I take compliments and affirmation when offered? That is to say, do I try to keep a healthy view of one's self? I tell myself, "If anything is going right, think about it and talk it up." My challenge is to avoid denying my predicament, and instead, to seek out gratitude and solution wherever I can.

Absent this, I would have to face dropping from Program out of a sense of failure. My Higher Power doesn't make failures, and it would be a denial of recovery to act like he does. In this season, this has to be my hope.

— Anonymous

Bottom Lines: The Beginning of a New Life

I was brand new in the program and sitting in a men's meeting when I heard D— say that he had not masturbated for two years. I already felt that my life was over before walking into this meeting. But when he said that, I felt as if the floor opened up and I was being beamed directly into hell because I knew that Higher Power was talking directly to me saying that I needed to make masturbation a bottom line.

So, I summoned my courage and met with D— to develop bottom lines. First, no sex with anyone. That was a no-brainer because my life had been ruined by my neediness to everything and certainly to sex. No pornography – that I could understand because of my level of addiction to porn. No fantasy to the best of my ability? OK, I can give that a try. Then D— also recommended that I give up caffeine because I had such an

obsessive mind. "Sure," I thought, but couldn't I give up anything else besides coffee? This was asking too much!

Then we got to masturbation and I realized that he was confirming that, because of my history, I should add masturbation to my bottom line. I was so hoping he would say that it wasn't necessary for me for some reason. But, no, he confirmed that it should be added. The idea of giving up masturbation was overwhelming compared to anything and everything else.

For some reason – maybe I heard it in a meeting – I hoped that if I could just focus on staying sober from masturbation, everything else would be OK. And that's how it worked in the beginning. But it was extremely difficult because withdrawal was more painful than anything I could have imagined. I had to sit

on my hands (literally!) and beg my Higher Power for sobriety one minute at a time. I don't ever want to have to try to withdraw from sex and relationship addiction again.

After two+ years I tried dating. Then after several years, I was in a committed relationship so my bottom line changed again to reflect that. Later, we married, so my current bottom lines are no sex outside of my marriage, no pornography, no fantasy to the best of my ability and no solo-masturbation.

Setting bottom lines and staying sober from them is one of the best things that's ever happened to me. It cleared up so much craziness and is allowing me to find out who I am and become who I am supposed to be. It truly was the beginning of a new life.

— Chris D.

My Most Important Bottom Lines

One of the fastest things that gave me relief when I walked in the doors of S.L.A.A. was setting bottom lines.

I was told to make a list of the things that triggered the insanity that brought me to my knees around my sex and love addiction.

And fortunately for me it was very clear what I did. The wildest and most wicked thing I did centered in desire and fantasy and frequently led to my destruction.

I would fall hook, line and sinker for a man I barely even knew. I'd think I was head over heels in love and that he was head over heels in love with me too, when we'd just barely met.

It began with a life-long desire to be loved totally and completely. My parents were supposed to fill this need from my first breath but unfortunately, they never did.

It was thwarted love. I had a loving, kind and caring dad but my mom and brothers were all very abusive to me. My mother was both verbally and physically abusive to me. Both of my brothers sexually abused me.

My mom was a rageaholic who seemed to get a greater thrill from tormenting me than she did from my brothers. So, in the end I just wanted to be loved. That was all. The problem was that I confused a lot of things with love.

The second part of the problem was fantasy, fairy tale fantasy to be precise. I wanted to be loved and really believed that there was a perfect person out there for me who was going to sweep me off my feet and take all my problems away. We were going to be so totally and completely in love that nothing could ever shake us.



I could do no wrong towards him and he would never do any wrong towards me. We would have plenty of

money to live in a nice home, travel the world and experience a great life together. Ha!

The combo of intense desire and fantasy led me to heartbreak after heartbreak and I just thought something was terribly wrong with me.

Of course, no one could ever fulfill all the huge expectations I had! It felt like my very own mother didn't love me so there just must have been something unlovable about me. And I couldn't figure out what it was.

So, one of the first and most liberating bottom lines I've set so far in my 4 1/2 years of sobriety is, I do not allow myself to fall head over heels for someone.

I take my time to get to know someone for who they really are, not for who I fantasize them to be.

I don't ever do the "He's the One" drama with someone I'm dating anymore.

I cannot entertain that kind of diseased thinking.

Instead I ask myself, "Is he the one I want to go out on one more date with?" Or "Is he the one I want to be my boyfriend one more day?"

I can't tell you how miraculous this bottom line has been for me. It sounds simple but the application of it is very difficult.

I must watch myself like a hawk because I'll project what is happening today to what might or could happen in the future and then I realize I'm on the fast track to my demise.

I pray the 3rd Step Prayer and change my focus immediately.

One of the many beautiful things about this is that it has forced me to slow down my dating process a lot. And while my addict doesn't like that, the new healthy me loves it.

There's no rush.

I don't need the hit of approval I used to thrive on. I no longer need all the drama this downward

spiral of insanity used to bring to my life.

I'm no longer looking for a super hero or a knight in shining armor.

I'm just looking for a real, fallible man just like me, a real, fallible woman to get to know and see if we want to spend more time together. That's all.

The second most powerful bottom line I've set so far is what I call my 30-day or 10 date dating manifesto. For no less than 30 days or 10, 2-or-more-hour dates, nothing comes unbuckled, unbelted, unzipped, unhooked or unsnapped!

And what that means to me is that I do not sexualize myself or my date in any way for 30 or more days or 10 or more dates. Nothing sexual is said or done.

This supports me in getting to know him for who he really is, not for just how sexually compatible we are and it helps him to get to know me for who I am and not just for my sensuousness and sexuality.

I've had to create an ironclad dating plan to enforce this and it works like magic but it is not easy at all! And it's not perfect.

My date might say something sexual or overly flirty with me and the old me would quickly crank it up a notch or two, but my healthy new self can respond slowly and calmly and dial it down instead of crank it up!

The dating plan that helps me achieve this, and I've done so in two sober, committed and monogamous relationships so far, helps me achieve the kind of pace that keeps me sober, calm and level headed.

It allows no sexual fantasizing about my date. This is a big one for me.

How could I ever keep my pants zipped if I was getting myself all worked up fantasizing about a guy?

Another method to my dating madness was an extremely romantic playlist I had that I would listen to all the time, song after romantic and sexual song! No more.

These two were the big triggering kingpins for me. Identifying these and setting bottom lines around them transformed my life.

There are a lot more details to the dating plan but honestly my 30-day, or 10 date, dating manifesto, eliminating fantasizing and eliminating extremely romantic and sexual music from my life has given me so much peace in dating that it is amazing.

The most important thing about these bottom lines is that they have given me freedom!

I am free to learn how to have real, healthy, happy relationships and I'm very happy to say that I'm getting better and better at it all the time.

I'm getting better at picking the men who are good for me instead of the ones who trigger my wild and wicked insanity.

I am so very thankful for all the men and women who share about their bottom lines, dating plans and about their relationships in our meetings and on outreach calls.

There is so much hope available to us in S.L.A.A. but we must work the Steps and do everything within our power to lead serene and sober lives.

While the sober relationship I'm in now is still new, I'm seeing behaviors in me I never thought possible before.

When the old me wants to say or do something that's not so healthy, I see it now ahead of time and I stop and smile to myself in gratitude that my disease no longer runs me.

— Anonymous in The OC

Bottom Lines Gave Me a Chance to Heal

I have often heard of 12-step programs as being life-saving. However, when I reflect on the life that I had, even before I was up to my neck in my disease, I did not want to keep that life.

I was full of anxiety, compulsion to isolate, and escaped in fantasy to a place where I thought I belonged.

In setting bottom lines in this program, I would say that this program is life-giving.

It has given me a life I actually want to save.

Bottom lines helped me identify what is self-destructive and what is life-preserving.

Before this program, I did not know how my own behaviors were the ones that were contributing to the misery I was experiencing. Whether it was in romantic relationships, or with difficult co-workers or family members, I would chase after unavailable people to try to shrink my feelings of loneliness.

They were the ones that I would keep sacrificing my dignity for, no matter how much it cost me. I could not see that I was doing anything wrong.

The need to find some kind of approval or connection was so deep, that I would sacrifice sleep, time, money, my dreams, my health, just so that I could have the promise of that approval. Inevitably, they would not be pleased, and I would find myself back in the pit, deciding whether or not to muster the strength to try to win their approval again or to give up.

Throughout this cycle, I was also cutting myself off from people who were emotionally available because I was scared that if they

knew the real me, they would not be able to accept me. I can be fair to myself today, and I realize that I was probably right: A lot of the people who were “emotionally available” would never have been able to understand the sick thinking and addictive behavior that comes with this disease.

When the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous talks about the “incomprehensible demoralization,” that phrase accurately describes the state that I was in when I finally began to think about working the 12 steps and setting bottom lines in S.L.A.A. This desperation was the only thing that made me willing to see that I had to stop chasing after the people that were never going to give me the love and approval that I felt that I needed. And that was a really difficult “drug” to give up. I don’t think I would have been willing to give up these behaviors had I not suffered so much up until that point. The healing began when I found the fellowship of S.L.A.A., and I could actually be honest about where I was at and about what my self-destructive tendencies are.

That honesty helped me see my part in the problem and set good bottom lines with my sponsor. Now, I do not feel like I have a knife that I am constantly turning inward on myself. The bottom lines have taken away the knife and given me a chance to heal. I am still a long way from where I want to be, or where my disease tells me I should be. But, I feel like



I would say that this program is life-giving. It has given me a life I actually want to save.

I am on the right path and finally have some peace with my life.

Even though some people would think that setting bottom lines is restrictive, I see these bottom lines like a rule for an alcoholic not to drink. Yes, it is limiting, but it is also life-giving. The only things I am excluding are the poisonous behaviors that were killing me.

And, I am not always the one who can identify what these behaviors are, because the disease is so cunning, baffling and powerful. I am so grateful for the fellowship and help of a sponsor to set bottom lines so I can grow a life worth saving.”

— Liz, Texas

Zero Physical Outlets for Self-destruction



Before I came into this program and into these rooms, I acted out compulsively based on self-loathing and fear. I masturbated multiple times per day, watched all kinds of porn, and drunkenly wrote love songs and poems for long-lost exes from years and years prior.

I over-ate and drank wine nightly with whomever my partner was at the time. Though I was indeed at capacity in sexual partners and romantic drama, I constantly sought out new connections through online dating. I hated myself, and I knew

I was no good in relationships with others. At 20 years old, I felt there was nothing left for me in this life.

After all, I always knew deep in my heart that the purpose of living is to connect genuinely and with “a universal love” which wouldn’t harm others. But I simply wasn’t capable of preventing myself from hurting anyone and everyone in my path, so I felt hopeless. In my last attempt to figure myself out before giving up completely, I read a book on polyamory. It was in the foreword of this book, that I learned about S.L.A.A., and thus attended my first meeting three

years and two months ago.

Abstaining from acting out in my bottom-line behaviors has not only left me with zero physical outlets for self-destruction, but has also offered me a life of serenity, happiness, spiritual health, and self-love that I never knew or even fathomed was possible for me.

I didn’t know that my first meeting would be my sobriety date. But I hated myself enough, and felt empty enough, to take any solution that was tossed my way. Later that night, when I sat and ate frozen yogurt with my future sponsor, and she asked me what

my average hook up looked like, I spat out the words that would soon become every single one of my bottom lines. No sex, no dating, no online dating, no porn, and no contact with qualifiers. We agreed on 3 months.

God flung self-awareness in my face like a pile of bricks. Without these distractions, I began to realize and realize and realize! I soon saw that no masturbation should be added to my bottom lines. And I realized how beautiful meditation is, and I became curious to see what would happen if I continued to practice sitting — and to practice this program.

I got to three months, and my freedom was immeasurable. I had been developing deep, platonic yet intimate connections with women in program. I felt safe. With faith in my Higher Power, along with loads of curiosity and a little bit of perfectionism and ego, I decided that I wanted to go six months without dating.

At six months, I was planning a trip to New Zealand. I was painting every night. I was journaling, bathing in blissful meditation, and working the Steps

with as much integrity as I knew at that time. I chose to go a year.

I celebrated my one year with a virgin Piña colada after a day of scuba diving with Manta Rays in the Yasawa Islands of Fiji. Yes, life was and is still triggering. There were men attempting to intrigue with me on that island for the entire week's stay. But as I crawled into the mosquito net bunk on my one-year anniversary, I cried slow, happy tears and thanked God for this life of adventure, curiosity, and true love, which I could not recognize.

Now, three years into this program, my spiritual highs are more minute, in sporadic spurts. I don't often feel the Kundalini clarity that I did in the beginning, but those golden light meditations have created a foundation of deep spiritual faith in this program and in my Higher Power that I never would have reached if I didn't abstain from my bottom lines.

I know how hard it is to create bottom lines and stick to them — I see newcomers enter and leave with wide eyes, because it's so scary. These behaviors have made me feel "safe" and "okay" for so

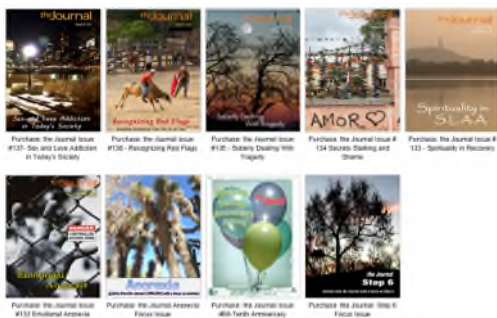
long — how can I trust the long-lasting alternative? In my experience, the alternative of working S.L.A.A. is nothing without fellowship. Without my sponsor, sponsees, and the best friends I made in this program, I would never feel the tribe-like community-based safety that is so utterly necessary in abstaining from dysfunctional, cyclical behaviors, so deeply ingrained in my past.

Today, my bottom lines are two: no sex outside of a committed relationship, and no porn. I still struggle with enmeshment, sexual clarity, and extreme self-judgment. But my life today is so much better than the alternative: I now know that I am fulfilled when single, and fulfilled when monogamous with a partner. In fact, romantic relationships are now for me, the sweet icing on the rich, decadent, spiritual and fulfilling cake that is my autonomous life with God and S.L.A.A.

I love this program!

— **Inexpressibly Grateful
in Southern California**

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Embrace Yourself With Love and Patience



Hello, my name is M.P. and I am a sex and love addict. They say some are sicker than others, and I definitely fall into that category. I've worked in the erotic entertainment business, had run-ins with the cops, been fired from my job for acting out, stalked people, planned to shoot people with a gun, had dangerous one-night stands with strangers, exposed myself to STDs, embarrassed my friends with my promiscuity, and have had inappropriate relationships with those much younger and much

older than me. In short, I qualify for this program! So, welcome, you are not alone.

This may sound strange, but one day you will be sitting in a meeting and share your most troubling secret acting out story that you want no one to know, and you will be met with loud, joyful laughter from a group of 20 people who can all relate and who just want to shower you with love, compassion and understanding.

And then you will laugh too, a deep hearty laugh you didn't know you had in you, because all these

behaviors will seem so strange now that you are finally receiving the unconditional love you craved all along from the group and from a God of your understanding. This just happened to me the other day in fact.

Anyway, setting bottom lines. My first advice is, be gentle. Those acting out behaviors, thought processes and coping mechanisms are all there for a reason. Say, "Thank you" to them from your heart, for they may have saved your life.

I said, "Thank you" to my

childhood compulsive masturbation. It saved me from having to face my sexual abuse at the time, which may have cracked my psyche wide open and done permanent damage.

So, I'm grateful to my addiction for what it may have once done to save my life. I start with that. I feel God gives us addiction to save our lives, and then gives us recovery to save our lives all over again. God is good like that. Embrace yourself with great love and patience.

This program is not easy, is not an overnight process, and you have the courage to even be reading this *Journal* and moving forward.

Take things one hour at a time, be kind. Be open to your own grief at how powerless you are over so much. Everything happens for a reason, I believe.

So now you begin to write down the behaviors that bother you, that make you feel poorly about yourself, that cause you stress, exhaustion, embarrassment, shame and guilt— all the things

that eat away at your inner peace, the things that have gotten you in trouble with the law, or removed you from the community, and the things that have broken up your relationships (for me, cheating).

Write down the things you do that only you know about. Secrets go on the page. Soon you will have a great list going. We are not concerned about thoughts and feelings, however, as we really can't control those things. What we can control is actions. For instance, masturbation to porn or fantasy is an action, so we can abstain from it. As we abstain, the thoughts and feelings gradually subside.

Now there is the question of whether staying off ALL your bottom lines is possible in the beginning. I have mixed feelings on this. I believe S.L.A.A. is a gradual recovery, unlike Alcoholics Anonymous, where you can put down the drink on day 1 and everyone does the same bottom line of not drinking or using drugs. Since sex addiction is

more complex, I believe that in the beginning with a hard-core sex addict, I would set a bottom line, for instance, of no unprotected sex.

This is the most life-endangering item on my list. In fact, I once had that as my sole bottom line since I couldn't handle anything stricter than that at the time. But that one thing made me feel I was making progress, and that I loved myself and was showing up for myself.

Later, however, I came to feel that going cold turkey off all bottom lines was the best approach, and that's what I did. I went into severe withdrawal, writhed on the floor in a fetal position, sweated it out like a junky in rehab and got "clean" off ALL bottom lines at once.

That was a powerful thing to do, because it made me know and understand very clearly how severe my addiction was, that I couldn't live without hits of validation from others, couldn't function without texts and contact with my ex.

I could see in my sweat, tears and shaking body the power of the sex and love "drug." So how quickly and how thoroughly you get off your bottom lines is really to be discussed with a sponsor, whose only aim is to help you make progress towards a healthy and happy life with great meaning and love in it.

I think sponsoring is different for each person, as each addict's patterns vary greatly. So, it's on a case by case basis.

One thing I feel is very important is to "tell on oneself", meaning to go to meetings and tell the truth about planning to act out, recently acting out, or fantasizing about acting out on bottom lines. Once it's out in the open, it loses its power over us somewhat.

For instance, I recently went to a meeting and told the group that



a man I'd gone on a date with had invited me back to his apartment, and it was very difficult for me not to go there, even with many years in recovery. I felt ashamed that I was so triggered by this proposition, because I'm an "old-timer" in program.

But I said it all at the meeting, and I felt an instant camaraderie with newcomers. A man with 6 days sober was helping me! I had to laugh. The desire to act out evaporated as I saw how my share helped others, and how others telling the truth at the meeting helped me.

Sometimes we are left alone out there with no lifeline to fellows, no meeting, no sponsor available, and yet we are determined not to act out on bottom lines. At the end of the day, God alone can lift the desire to act out.

I've heard it said at A.A. meetings that even if the whole world drinks, I will not drink, meaning we rely upon God for the ultimate reprieve from self-harm. Meetings, fellows and sponsors are lifesavers, but you will eventually encounter a moment when you must get down on your hands and knees in a gas station bathroom and pray like you've never prayed before. And at that moment you will know true reliance on Higher Power. You will not be let down. God will come through, you must cultivate that faith and believe that God has your back.

Mysteriously, circumstances change and the desire to act out is lifted. Then, for all your worth, you must go give that grace back to a newcomer. Even if you have 6 days of not acting out, rest assured you have something to offer the man or woman with 3 days. Reach out to them and give them your strength. They need it to get

One thing I feel is very important is to "tell on oneself," meaning to go to meetings and tell the truth about planning to act out, recently acting out, or fantasizing about acting out on bottom lines. Once it's out in the open, it loses its power over us somewhat.

through day 4!

The key to sobriety in any program is service. Service will save your ass. When you are cut off from program, meetings,

sponsors and the literature and you are struggling, bow your head and ask yourself, "How can I be of service?"

I have been at school, gotten triggered to act out, and asked myself this question. The answer came to me: set up chairs for orchestra (I was a music major). I found myself helping the conductor to set up the stage for rehearsal. As I did the physical work of lifting the chairs and music stands, the disease grew quiet inside me and I felt the sunlight of the spirit return. So, it doesn't have to be service just at meetings. The world is full of jobs we can do to help other people.

This spirit of helpfulness and loving kindness towards others is like an antibody dispelling the disease of sex and love addiction, which is ultimately selfishness and self-centeredness. As the Big Book of A.A. says, "When sex is a problem, throw yourself into service." It really works. It's amazing.

I guess that's all I have to say for now. Just know that we here in the big city of Los Angeles are thinking of you and praying for your recovery, wherever you may be. We are fortunate to have so many meetings here, sometimes more than 3 a day. So, you can always move out here and join our big, crazy fellowship. Or, you can start a meeting in your town, and be a light for other struggling sex and love addicts who need your initiative.

There is much support from intergroup and the fellowship on starting meetings. This disease was once full of stigma and shame, but today we are rising to a new level of evolution, understanding there is a solution and pursuing it with open hearts. Welcome to our broad highway, we're glad you're alive and joining us!

May all beings be at ease.

— M.P.



Upside-down No More



Setting bottom lines is easy. It's the keeping them set that is a whole other matter. My bottom line behavior is any behavior that allows me to escape from feelings that are uncomfortable or painful, such as loneliness, unworthiness or fear. If I am feeling lonely, unworthy or fearful, my go-to solution is more than likely a harmful bottom line behavior, such as isolating with porn and masturbation.

So my bottom line behaviors

have an unhealthy component that medicates and numbs, such as being captivated by porn for hours.

Or my bottom line behaviors make me obsessed and manic, like procuring anonymous sex on apps. I literally get high from the intrigue and sex talk. I feel the dopamine dumps behind my eyes. I don't even have to meet in person, as staying in my head usually does the trick.

So my bottom line behaviors

alter my mood by allowing me to escape or by making me high with the intensity of the brain chemical dumps. Either way, I am unavailable to feel my real feelings, as I am held captive by sex and obsession. When the feelings I was trying to escape from return with a vengeance and the despair sets in, the craving I have to engage in a certain sexual behavior clearly points to something that should be on my bottom line.

For me, masturbation is something I have always used for escape. If you're like me, masturbation is classic bottom line behavior, as I've used it to cope since childhood, so consequently, it is very difficult to let go of. It is such an intense, naturally focused activity, that all feelings are temporarily shoved aside. In my case, besides the mind numbing intensity, I also get the sleep drug from my physiological response to orgasm. Usually the painful feelings can't follow me into that deep drugged sleep. I intuitively know whether something should be on my bottom line if I have a use for it, meaning I get a payoff, which, not surprisingly, is not how a healthy person would use it.

For instance, many men watch

porn, but do they have the same use for it that I do, meaning not feeling, escaping into the images and intensity, frying their brains so that they feel nothing?

Struggling to not engage in a behavior is also a good indication that it is addictive, as the use of the behavior is once again creating a craving.

Another good way to determine if a behavior should be on one's bottom line is to do a pros/cons exercise around the behavior. When I see the cons staring at me in black and white, it is much more difficult to delude myself, as the cons are no longer tucked so far away in the deep recesses of my delusional addict brain.

In my case, the anonymous sex I was engaging in was not the best sex of my life after all, once the

risks that I was taking physically and emotionally were staring at me in black and white.

I could finally see the insanity around my insatiable need to have unprotected sex. Normal people don't have unprotected sex with strangers, but use protection with a life partner. Usually it is the other way around, which clearly illustrates the insane upside-down world of being an addict.

By sticking to my bottom lines, my upside-down world is now being turned right side up. I am finally learning how to deal with my feelings in a healthy way. I am letting go of all those messages I told myself: none of which are true. I owe my life to this program and to my Higher Power.

— Craig G.

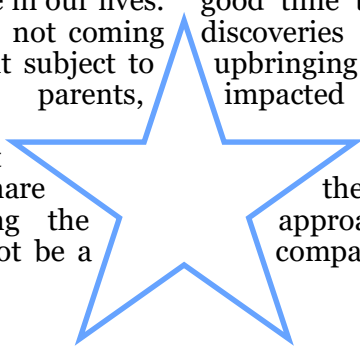
Share space

Avoiding Isolation During the Holiday Season

The holidays may not be joyous for everyone. Many people may even view them with a sense of dread. Spending time with our family of origin may not be a safe place for us at times in our recovery. For the sake of our emotional health, we may have to avoid the usual visit with

them for the first time in our lives. The fact that you are not coming can be a very difficult subject to broach with the parents, especially if your life in recovery is not something you share with them. Breaking the news to them may not be a

good time to divulge any recent discoveries of how your upbringing has negatively impacted your life. Instead of focusing on how your decision to not visit them may affect them, approach it as a loving and compassionate act for



yourself. Simply explaining to them that you have made other plans for this year is all you really need to say. Next year may be different and you may have renewed appreciation for them in a year's time but this year is yours.

Be sure to make other plans. The safety of not having to spend another holiday with our dysfunctional families of origin does not have to be an invitation to spend the time in isolation. Make an announcement at your Thursday meeting weeks in

advance that you will be attending on Thanksgiving. (Christmas Eve is on a Saturday and Christmas is on Sunday this year).

You can organize a group of your fellow travelers in the program and arrange a reservation at a local restaurant for a traditional holiday dinner. Others in the program may be in a similar situation and really appreciate this act of service. Last year my local Thursday meeting had just two people on Thanksgiving, the dedicated

meeting secretary, and one other very grateful person.

Afterwards, they met for fellowship with a group of other addicts and had a wonderful dinner, free of family tensions.

The holidays can be a difficult time to be on our own but know that you are not alone. Just because you do not choose to visit with your family of origin, does not mean you do not have a family to spend the holiday with.

— Tony B., Orange County

Saving My Healthy Relationship

Hi, I am Roger and I am a sex and love addict. My addiction, of which the primary manifestation was frequent infidelities in my two marriages was prevalent during most of my first marriage. When I left that marriage I thought that the behavior would stop, which it did for about three years, but then started again.

My behavior was then discovered and I got into recovery and have been faithful for over 18 years now, have a successful marriage and have a healthy relationship which I never thought would be possible.

It was made possible because of heavy involvement in the S.L.A.A. program which included numerous service positions and over 4,000 meetings.

I also attended residential therapy programs as well as personal therapy, retreats and

S.L.A.A. conventions.

My family of origin contributed to some characteristics which made it easier for me to follow in sex addiction as a means of coping and medicating.

Unachievable expectations left me looking for validation, so seduction temporarily gave me that validation and was more important than sex as a part of the addiction. I also feel that trying to prove my masculinity as well as perhaps acting out some hostility through seduction may have been a contributing factor.

Whatever the combination of causes might have been, sex was my main way of medicating, although the use of alcohol was also a contributing factor. After I got "busted" in my behavior I got into recovery and continued a very frequent attendance at meetings throughout my period of recovery. Over the years, I found that I

could use the caring and understanding I received in the meetings for what I used to believe I was receiving by acting out.

This constant caring and understanding has contributed greatly to my ability to do the same in my current marriage.

It has helped that my current wife curbs any need she might feel to remind me of my previous hurtful behavior, because she almost never brings up the hurt that she felt during that period of my early recovery.

Of course, the sobriety from acting out was essential to save the relationship, but I believe that the interaction I have had with other program members was equally as important in strengthening the relationship.

—Roger

Gratitude and What I Have Learned

When I started the S.L.A.A. program, I was resistant to proceeding with the 12 Steps because it felt like it was a religiously oriented program with a pre-requisite of believing in God as an anthropomorphic notion; one to which I couldn't subscribe.

After staying the course for a while and listening to the honesty, courage and determination (for the most part) of fellow S.L.A.A. travelers, I decided to get a sponsor and embark on the Steps.

I discovered in the process that Higher Power (HP) could be God but could also be "God as I understood God," and that gave me the freedom to choose my HP, which is love; in all its myriad dimensions.

This, all of a sudden, opened up my perspective and enabled me to see that the process could be a spiritual strategy rather than a mere tactic for staying

sober.

I am grateful first and foremost to my wife (above and beyond anything I can say) and to my close family and friends for their unconditional support, love and friendship since my journey of recovery and spiritual elevation began. I'm also grateful to my sponsor, to the program and to my fellow group members for their insights and their stories that have enriched my own experience.

Now that I have completed the 12th Step, I fully understand that this is not a program with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The S.L.A.A. 12-Step process is one that I started a few years ago and will carry on with until I die. I say that because I realize that it is all about growing my spirit as a human being on this planet; no less.

Continuing to take inventory of my actions and my thoughts is important because it reveals my blind spots and knowing them enables me to change.


When I discover I am wrong, have made a mistake, have offended anyone, and so on and promptly admit it, this is a way of making me more aware of, and more accountable for, my actions. This is not just about sex and love related actions by the way, this is about all and any actions in my life; of that I am now clear.

When I meditate 2, 3, 4 or more times per week, even if for only a few minutes every time, I practice being more present to the world around me, to perceiving how my mind works and what gets in my way.

This is an eye opener and a learning process for which I'll be forever thankful. I have learned about my fears and anxieties and how my addiction was a defense mechanism that could be considered clever (for a little boy) from a survival point of view but too dangerous and too harmful to myself (as an adult) and others, especially those (my wife specifically) whom I truly love and depend on, to be a life strategy.

I have learned that my addiction kept me immature, selfish and cruel. It stunted my growth as a person and rendered me limited, frustrated, fearful and spiritually malnourished. I have learned that there is only one person on earth that I can change and that is me. I have learned too that changing myself changes the world and that feels good, and makes me stronger and more compassionate; the kind of person I want to be.

—Anonymous



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Step One and My Soulmate

I met my soulmate in 1990. That he was truly my soulmate was confirmed by several psychics & healers. My essence twin – my twin soul. I felt in an altered state when I first hung out in a room with him. Bliss and wholeness.

The only problem was he was married. But his wife, who was also in the room, realized he and I had a special bond.

In fact, everyone in the room felt it. I got up and sat in his lap though I hardly knew him in this life. He and his wife, I came to learn, were emotionally dependent on each other and he, financially

dependent on her.

Since they were also into open relationships, we began to date and fell in love. I moved to his town and one or two days later he refused to see me!

I was devastated but somehow wound up in my first S.L.A.A. meeting. My soulmate, I believe, was used to bring me to my knees and into recovery.

I have been told that a famous sports figure and his wife were also soulmates or "essence twins" before he killed her. When I heard that, I could believe it, after my experience.

Your soulmate comes

sometimes to teach you your hardest lessons.

He eventually left his wife. He and I got back together for 7 years of turmoil, depression, etc. When he left, having an affair to spite me on his way out, I again re-entered S.L.A.A. and now have stayed for 9 years. Recently, I have had a deep, quiet spiritual awakening.

I write this to dispel the glorious myth of the ideal romantic fantasy of soulmates. God often uses them to teach us our most painful lessons, which of course can become our greatest blessings.

— Anonymous

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

PLEASE EMAIL SHARES TO THE JOURNAL WWW.SLAAFWS.ORG

SETTING BOTTOM LINES

QUOTE: *The "freedom" to define our own addictive pattern could not be used in a self-serving way. Our addictions are a reality that persists regardless of any short-sighted, convenient definition. S.L.A.A. Basic Text, Page 72*

SHARE: I've had difficulty setting boundaries for myself and my life, so I didn't know how to set bottom lines. I started with very clear definitions, such as, "Don't have sex with married people." It was helpful to be specific and to work with my sponsor every step of the way. If I put "having a sexual thought" on my bottom line, I'd have to pick up a desire chip every couple of hours. But if I left off some items because I wasn't ready to let go of them, it wouldn't be long before I ended up back in the same pit of despair. As I grew in recovery, I became more aware of how my addiction controlled me on subtle levels. The definition of my sobriety grows with me. If I make an excuse like, "It's not on my bottom line, so it's okay," what once was not a problem could become one. It's important that I am honest with myself and with my sponsor in evaluating how I define my sobriety, whether I've been sober for three days or three decades.

AFFIRMATION: *As I make progress in recovery, I will check in with myself and my sponsor to stay mindful of my behavior and make changes to my bottom lines as necessary.*



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