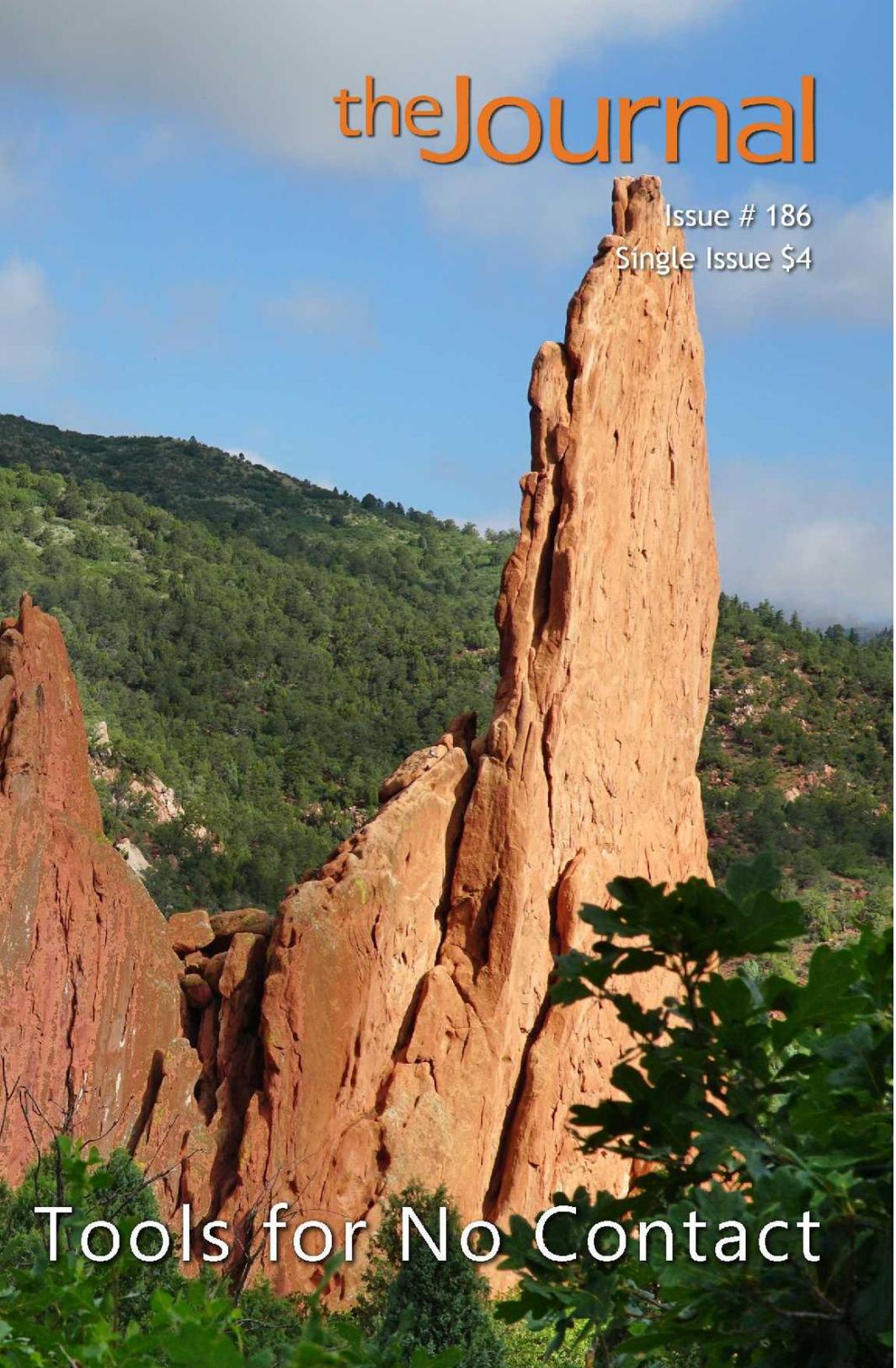


theJournal

The cover of theJournal magazine features a prominent, tall, reddish-brown rock spire that rises vertically from a forested hillside. The rock has a textured, layered appearance with some vertical fissures. The background is a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The foreground is filled with lush green foliage, including large oak leaves, which are slightly out of focus, creating a sense of depth. The overall scene is a natural, scenic landscape.

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Tools for No Contact

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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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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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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In submitting such content to S.L.A.A., the member releases S.L.A.A., any other members of S.L.A.A. and S.L.A.A.'s officers, directors, employees and agents (collectively, the "Releasees") from any and all claims which the member may have against any of the Releasees in connection with the member's submission of content to *the Journal*.

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Managing Editor	Lisa C.
Art Director	Fiona
Outreach Director	Becca
Proofreaders for this issue	Chris D. Beth L.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

I think it's great that this issue corresponds with the new Conference-Approved literature, "The Gift of No Contact" appearing in the F.W.S. online store. This booklet was approved at last year's ABM and is a good tool to use for a boost to recovery.

It's surprising that something (a no contact rule) once thought of as suffering equal to death is now a gift from the S.L.A.A. program of recovery to all of its members who use it.

The stories in this issue are a testament to that. We can get through the withdrawal associated with a no contact with the object of our obsession bottom line.

I tried many times to stick to no contact over the years before my sobriety in S.L.A.A. Even in S.L.A.A., I kept making the rule and breaking it, "I just need a hug," or "I'll just open this email" was an easy excuse to open the door to insanity over and over again. And like the alcoholic who thinks, "I'll just put a little whiskey in my milk with lunch" and finds himself drunkenly pounding his fist on the bar wondering how he got there, I would find myself breaking my bottom lines and high from the endorphins of being with my qualifier in S.L.A.A.

Going through the withdrawal was tough but dignity building. But accidentally running into my qualifier was even tougher. It's like someone yanks your feet out from under you and you're sitting on the floor wondering how you got there. And in the middle of all that you have to find the strength to adhere to a no contact rule. My sponsor told me to look at my feet, mumble like a crazy person and walk away. I found myself laughing at myself enough to be able to walk away without breaking no contact. Thank God for S.L.A.A. fellows and sponsors! (And this issue of *the Journal* helps a lot!)

Lisa C., Managing Editor, *the Journal*

Question of the Day & Answers from Yesterday

The Question of the Day for this issue is, “Have you ever gotten through the pain of a no contact rule to come to some new revelation about

yourself, clarity, peace, or mindfulness? Please share any tools that make no contact easier.” Here are some insights that were submitted in service from fellow S.L.A.A. members. They are not presented in any particular order. The next two themes are: #187 — Nov./Dec. — Reconciliation — Please share your experience, strength, and hope around reconciliation. “How do you deal with expectations and lay an entirely new foundation for cooperation, trust and intimacy?” — Deadline for submissions is Sept. 15, 2020. And #188 — Jan./Feb.— Anonymity — “Anonymity: Do you feel different about anonymity than when you first got here? Please share your experience, strength, and hope around breaking your anonymity to help another or any experiences around anonymity that have helped you grow in recovery.” — Deadline for submissions is Nov. 15, 2020. Please send answers to www.slaafws.org.

“Have you ever gotten through the pain of a no contact rule to come to some new revelation about yourself, clarity, peace, or mindfulness?
Please share any tools that make no contact easier.”

When I finally got into a relationship where I hit a hard bottom and finally started working the Steps, I went into no contact. My sponsor suggested only allowing a 3-second rule-stop thinking of them after 3 seconds. Service work was a big help. It was also helpful to go to meetings and fellowship with my support group. No contact was a big part of recovery and helped give me the serenity that I have today.

— P.A., HOUSTON, TX

Question of the day

This was probably one of the most difficult things for me in early recovery. I was lucky that cell phones weren't a big issue, so I didn't have to block phone numbers and texts, etc. Obviously having a sponsor and several accountability partners is great. Just as important is trying to have things to do that make you feel good so missing the person is not quite as bad. Whether it's taking up bowling (or now with the virus, virtual bowling) or having an exercise routine, etc., anything healthy that can make us feel better about ourselves makes the withdrawal from the person easier. One thing I also used to do a lot was to pray for the willingness to avoid contacting the person and not responding to their attempts to contact me. I found praying for the willingness was gentler and easier for me than praying for no contact. Anyhow, good luck to all those in the middle of no contacts. If you can get through to the other side, you've really accomplished something.

— BOB D., SARASOTA, FLA

Beyond the obvious tools such as blocking numbers on my phone and people on Facebook, I had to ask people to please not mention my former husband to me — not forever, I explained, but I was still processing my grief and needed space to recover. Everyone understood. I still obsessed for hours a day about him and the breakdown of our marriage. The tools that worked most were outreach, working the Steps (especially Steps 4 and 5) and using mindfulness to be aware my thoughts were returning to rumination about him and I would hand it over to God. Eventually the obsession was lifted, and I am forever grateful.

— CELIA G., MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Tools for No Contact

Growing up in an alcoholic family, unavailability feels like love to me. When my qualifier started dating someone new shortly after we broke up, my obsession became unmanageable. I was unable to concentrate on work or take care of myself emotionally. I would check his social media constantly, which just re-traumatized me. I tried to be “friends” with him because I thought that was the mature thing to do. All this did was hurt me more and more. I eventually had to block his number and all social media accounts in order to move forward and heal. During the withdrawal process, I came to discover that I was using this relationship to “fill me up” and distract me from this intense sense of loneliness and lack of self-worth that I felt all my life. The gift of this painful process was discovering that I needed to develop all parts of my life — my hobbies, friendships (inside and outside the rooms), and learn how to take care of myself emotionally. In addition, feelings never killed anyone. They are all part of the human experience. Just because some feelings don’t feel good, does not mean they are abnormal or negative.

— TONY, MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

For me, I had to do everything in my power to have no contact with an addictive relationship. This was a huge hassle, changing my phone number, changing my email, not answering the door, and hanging up on him when he called my work! What ensued was an incredible peace that could only come from Higher Power. Recovery began when I was willing to do whatever it took to be free and left the results up to God.

— SUSAN G., HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA

Question of the day

I have not found any tools to help me through my unique no contact pain. Service helps keep my mind off the pain.

— SAM E., NYC

Yes. I made a decision after clear inventory results and discussion with my sponsor. I needed prayer support and emotional, spiritual, and physical distance.

— ANTHONY P.

When I came into S.L.A.A., I got rid of my smart phone, got a flip phone and most important, I changed my phone number. I did not have to be concerned with incoming phone numbers that I had to block or avoid. I learned that I could focus on me without the added struggle of prior acting out partners reaching me. I also learned not to answer the phone when an unknown number came through. I knew that if it were important, the person could leave a message.

For my sponsees or other recovery friends who can't switch their phone number, I've suggested renaming their contacts of prior acting out partners or triggering people as "do not answer" or "call my sponsor," etc.

— ARI F., NJ

Yes, getting introduced to S.L.A.A. because of a romantic obsession/no contact was the greatest gift I could have been given. I have gotten to know myself and can say today I am worthy just because I'm me.

— LINDSEY, WEST PALM BEACH

Tools for No Contact

“If our primary addictive problem was obsessive love dependency, we separated from or severed ties with our ‘partners.’” This sentence in Step 1 of our Basic Text was one of the most powerful statements I had ever read — it was as if H.P. was speaking directly to me. It meant that I was going to have to completely separate from the “man of my dreams.” I thought separation from him meant death to me — the fact that he dumped me several weeks before helped but that didn’t stop my fantasizing. What actually happened was that continuing to interact with him was torture. Separation didn’t feel much better, but it provided me the opportunity to grow.

— CHRIS D., SAN DIEGO

Tools that made no contact easier for me: deleting and blocking qualifier’s number, deleting old texts and emails, getting rid of photos and gifts, replacing intrigue and euphoric recall with top line behaviors, being accountable and staying in contact with a sponsor and fellows, daily meetings, Inspiration Line, and most importantly taking bubble baths while reading current and past issues of *the Journal!!!*

— AGGY

I had worked as a sponsor with a newcomer who shared some serious issues of his sexual history. It took a while for him to get it out. I thanked him for his honesty and openness and his trust in me. Less than 2 weeks later, he quit S.L.A.A. and asked me not to contact him. I prayed for him but did not contact him until he texted and asked me to call.

— ANONYMOUS

Question of the day

When I entered withdrawal with an indefinite period of no contact, I thought I'd explode if I didn't say some things I *needed* to say. But I knew I'd only continue my pattern of love addiction if I broke my no contact rule to say these things I felt so strongly that I *needed* to say. I knew that my only real choice was to get them out — on paper or in some electronic form — and *not* say or send them, at least not until my withdrawal was complete. And so, I composed an email with an empty recipient line, and poured all of those burning words onto the electronic page. I returned to it many times during my withdrawal, editing it, adding more, and getting really clear on what needed to be there, regardless of whether anyone else ever heard or read it. Ultimately, I learned that I actually *didn't* really need to say those things. And more generally I learned that when I'm feeling that I absolutely *must* do/have/be something or I'll explode/die/etc. these are quite often the very times that my addiction is guiding me rather than my HP. Today I don't have to believe the addiction; I can choose to rely on my HP to carry me through those burning desires.

— C.B., WASHINGTON, D.C.

Fellowship, fellowship, fellowship! The more time I spent with other recovering addicts took my mind off of the contact I was missing and taught me how to live on my own in comfort and security. Separating myself from my addictive partner allowed me to see the relationship more clearly and see just how much power she had over me. She is no longer my Higher Power.

— CHRIS M., SAN ANTONIO, TX

Yes. When I made a no contact rule with a fellow, I felt a freedom and self-esteem that I hadn't felt before. I realized I could choose to be happy over choosing to have contact. Toplines are a great help with this.

— FIONA, LONDON

Tools for No Contact

Identifying all the ways I would contact my qualifier was very eye opening to me. It showed me how my addict would find loopholes and justifications in anything. I have kept that as a tool I use when I make decisions for everything and it reminds me that the little things matter.

— ANNA F., WACO, TX

The only tool I have is to set a date in the future, Christmas, Groundhog's day, ex's birthday. I say to myself the no contact rule will not last forever, just until that date. When the day gets closer, I set another date in the future. The revelation I got from this was that the person I made the no contact rule for was a narcissist.

— DAVE G., LOS ANGELES

I was forbidden, under permanent loss of position, from seeing a woman with whom I had been sexually involved. She had reported me. I had not wanted to break up, and I felt the pain of losing what had been such a comforting physical relationship. Only prayer, meditation, and seeking my Higher Power's guidance led me to put her welfare consistently ahead of my own. (She had twice attempted suicide.) I prayed for us both, and I never spoke to her again.

— DOUG P., CLEVELAND, OH

During my first no contact the withdrawal chapter in the Basic Text was helpful. The paragraph about "discovering a part of myself I'd never known before" was a grace. Attending many meetings to share the pain and challenge was very helpful.

— NANCY G., SAN DIEGO

Surviving No Contact



Here's the straightforward reality of surviving no contact – it is painful. There is no easy, painless way through. When an addict is in withdrawal it is not painless, so if painless is my expectation, I am being unrealistic. If I realistically shift my paradigm, I can be

successful. No contact is going to hurt, it is going to suck, so arming myself with that knowledge that I personally have felt and heard reiterated hundreds of times by myself and fellow travelers in meetings, I can at least be prepared for the emotional component that will surely rear

its ugly head. If my recovery is based in reality and awareness, I have the ability to stay in the present moment and identify and even accept what is going on with pain, instead of denying and resisting it.

Resistance takes so much energy. If I can focus energy on self-care and using recovery tools rather than clawing at the sides of an emotional pit made of sand where I feel I am being dragged down to despair by an “unexpected” pain, I can get a foothold. There is actually prep work I can do beforehand.

If I were going to fly a plane and I had no preparation, I would probably crash the plane. I do not want to crash and burn. I want to live to see another day, so if I reach out to someone who has successfully flown a recovery plane (as it were) like my sponsor, I get practical helpful insights.

Understanding why no contact is a healthy goal and not punitive is an excellent place to start. If I embrace the concept of no contact as self-protection against greater future pain, I understand I am providing myself with a loving kindness, not a disservice. I know my youngest and most vulnerable parts want what they want when they want it,

however, recognizing a full spectrum of disturbing consequences when a qualifier is contacted, will save me a world of hurt.

My young addict mind fully wanted someone to rescue me and the hit of getting high off an orgasm was potent. So, in recovery, what is a bigger and better goal? I do not want to die. The progressive risks, escalating behaviors and increasing lack of standards with partners left me exposed to disease and harm that my addictive mind hardly pondered. Through repetition of affirmations, building self-esteem by learning how to care for myself and others in an authentic way in the rooms, I have gradually understood that I am worthy of care, of protection and of genuine affection. Bridging the gap from toxic addiction to having my needs met in healthy ways is a daily practice. I have learned that the more time I spend in meetings, reading the Basic Text, talking, and listening to my sponsor and recovery partners, the less time I have to act out emotionally and otherwise.

Quick help:

- The very act of picking up the phone to call a recovery

partner stops me in my tracks from calling someone who it is not in my best interest to call.

- First, I have to get out of the bulls**t of my own sick thinking that it is not necessarily a problem to call a qualifier. Duh, it's a problem.

- Having a good size list of available recovery partners when I need them not only helps me stay sober, but helps me learn how to listen and to be relational in healthy ways

that have nothing to do with sexuality.

The result of using these tools has brought me peace and kept me out of the cesspool of drama that I was accustomed to diving into. No contact is hard, but it is doable. It is not painless, but it is surely less painful than a more prolonged withdrawal and abandoning myself and my serenity.

— HEIDI

The Darkness of Withdrawal Gave Me the Clarity of Recovery

No contact for a sex and love, rescuer, controlling, co-dependent addict like me was simply the hardest thing my sponsor ever suggested to me.

I am grateful for strong sponsorship; my sponsor knew exactly when I was ready to send the message to my qualifier telling him not to contact me for 30 days. Of course, I could not imagine how this could be possible. The

negotiation started, “How about just one call a week? What about 1 text a day? Can I at least answer his calls/texts or emails?” My sponsor’s reply was “remember that when we negotiate any suggestions a sponsor gives us, it’s our addiction talking.”

And I don’t know about you, but my addiction speaks to me, and it tells me things like, “What’s the use? This is a waste of time. What’s the

point? etc.” You know, in some ways that makes sense.

But I came to S.L.A.A. to recover, to find ways to live a better life. I came by the grace of God with the gift of desperation.

I was ready to do whatever it took to know the answers to all my questions, like: “Why do I keep attracting and being attracted to the same type of men? Why do I like the uneducated, irresponsible, disrespectful, arrogant, unemployed, emotionally unavailable, unfaithful men? Why am I addicted to rejection?”

By exercising the “contrary action muscle” and giving myself the gift of withdrawal, I found the answers to those and many other questions. I found self-esteem. My ego was deflated. I stopped feeling sorry for myself and stopped playing the victim card. I figured the blame game always ends with “me.”

The clarity I got by doing the opposite of everything I wanted and was accustomed to do gave me the clarity needed to recover. My addiction still

talks to me, but my recovery voice is so much louder, and much clearer, because I gave myself a chance for a better life — a life where I am no longer lonely, but I love my solitude, where I am happy, where the darkness of my addiction disappeared, and light has entered my life.

I have a life where I know that acceptance is the key to my freedom, accepting when he does not like me, is not available, does not want a relationship, accepting that fact and being grateful the obsession has been lifted.

I know in my heart that a man’s rejection is God’s protection.

Letting go and letting God means I pray for others, I say “thy will be done” throughout the day and mean it.

It means getting out of God’s way and knowing I will be taken care of at all times, knowing God was always there for me, even at my darkest moments. It was never about having more God, but less me.

The darkness of withdrawal gave me the clarity of recovery.

— VIVIAN

'No Thanks' to Friendship

I recently broke no contact out of not very well thought out curiosity, to finalize closure, and to take some responsibility on my end while defining my boundaries. My motive wasn't super clear and maybe I wondered if we could be friends. I discovered no to friendship, not on my end, thanks. This recent period of no contact (50 days, but who's counting?) was broken by an accidental call on my part. I thought, maybe unblocking the number is a start. I stopped the call when I realized it was happening and instead sent a text welcoming a conversation, which was immediately returned with a phone call that sort of surprised me.

After a couple years without a relationship and very little dating in the meantime, it was certainly a dry spell for me. I dated this person non-romantically, but with mutual interest of that possibly developing. The few dates and shared time on a vacation quickly let me escalate into expressing the

characteristic of sex and love addiction that involves emotionally attaching to people who I don't know well. This attachment takes form in non-romantic relationships as well and is quite painful. I had recently experienced multiple rejections by reaching out to platonic "friends" who tend to ignore my contact, and this on top of the isolation of staying at home due to the pandemic may have tipped me to initiate contact. In addition, I met this person in another program and there was a chance I might have run into them at an online event that day, leading me to think about contact and to send that text. Talking and finding out how much the person has moved on, I felt myself act out the characteristic of avoiding vulnerability by withdrawing from involvement and into anorexia.

Talking to a fellow older S.L.A.A. member, I was pondering how much more

difficult it seems as an older person to bounce back from failed dating attempts, feeling less physically attractive and therefore less likely to have other opportunities than I used to be accustomed to. This, exacerbated by social distancing, was a tough time to break up, which I did because those attachment feelings were not reciprocated.

One thing that made no contact easier for me was to list the pros and cons of being around the person I was distancing myself from. I had to grieve the pros and let the cons strengthen my resolve. Reading those cons over and over made me realize how this person was inappropriate for me and gave me a sense of peace and resolve. Love addiction is not logical. I have the S.L.A.A. characteristic of attaching myself to emotionally unavailable people.

I recognized this and put a stop to it with a no contact rule. The characteristic of being enslaved by this emotional dependency means I have to stay diligent. The spiritual aspect of this program is huge for me. I keep a constant conversation

with God going that leads to a sense of intimacy that is crucial for my well-being and to staying safe from addictive behaviors. I focus on God's will for me.

My resolve to return to no contact is best. Having been current and accountable with people and making outreach calls has helped me to bounce back. Using to-do lists and self-care routines always help me get out of the funk and obsessive loop of withdrawal. Taking a break from no contact helps me remember why I set it. During the phone call, I literally developed an instant and very sick feeling of knots in my stomach the moment this person started "getting current" with me on the phone. No amount of small talk or sharing of facts from this person with whom I have been assigning magical qualities could fill that bottomless pit of my addiction that is full of unmet emotional and intimacy needs. I chose not to get current, to honor that sick feeling, and instead, to focus on revisiting our last conversation, removing some of my blame of the other

person to say that it was really my issue of getting easily attached that caused my choice to end it. I could state one thing that I allowed (having things paid for during our visits and vacation by this person) that misled me, even though this person

says, “That’s how I roll.” Separating myself mentally and emotionally and even in my motives and goals is going to be a long process. The obsession is real. Reading the *S.L.A.A. Journal* has been very helpful during this time.

— ANONYMOUS

No Contact With My Prison Pen Pal

My hands trembled across the keys as I typed “No talking to Nate,” onto my list of bottom lines on a document open on my laptop. *Ugh, do I have to do this?* I bargained with myself. It had been a few days since we had talked, but I knew that I could never speak to him again. I knew that I shouldn’t have escalated things to the point they got to in the first place and that I was in dangerous waters.

Nate was my prison pen pal. We corresponded while he was in Texas for five joyful months where I told myself that he was just a friend, yet my heart would beat fast in my chest when I received a letter from

him. I felt high reading his letters. After the five months, he was then transported to my state of Massachusetts from 2,000 miles away in order to settle a case before he got released.

I visited him in prison, and he told me of his crimes in a vague sense by saying he had “downloaded some things off the internet that he shouldn’t have.” He didn’t tell me specifics, so I was left to wonder. *Was it child porn? What else could it be?* He acted awkward about it but not as remorseful as I’d have liked to see.

I went home to Google his name. I hadn’t done it in all of the time we were

corresponding because I wanted to give him space to tell me what his crime was.

Turns out they were sex offender related incidents, plural. One in Massachusetts, the one he was settling, the other in Texas. A wave of nausea overwhelmed me. I justified his behavior by saying, "He has probably changed; everyone deserves a second chance." These things may be true, but I didn't need to stick around and find out.

Though instead of running away, I ran towards. Perhaps it was some messed up response to the crime he committed against a minor being the same crime that was committed against me when I was 14. I can't explain why I did what I did in getting involved with him.

When he got out of prison a few days later, he was again 2,000 miles away. We texted like crazy for 10 days before I finally acknowledged that this was bad news and I needed to get out. I knew the whole time that it was a bad idea, I just had that addict level of unwillingness. I knew I was doing something wrong, yet it would have taken the jaws of life to remove me from this

situation if not on my own accord. When I cut off the contact, I felt instant withdrawal all over again. My symptoms were very similar to those in withdrawal from a substance.

I wasn't sleeping, I was constantly checking my phone. I felt sick to my stomach and was deeply depressed.

I agonized over wanting to text him, especially when he reached out once. I told myself, though, that I was going to leave it at that. Continuing to have him in my life would be utterly toxic.

I wasn't willing to block him, but a few weeks in, I set the "no contact" bottom line. I didn't want to, that's for sure. I wanted to keep the door open in case I changed my mind. I even left his texts in my inbox for six months "just in case" I wanted to reach out again.

I spent the following months off and on thinking about Nate, pining for him, even when I found myself in a healthy relationship. I refused to delete his number. *If I delete his number, I'll have no way of contacting him. He doesn't have social media, so I'd have to contact his dad if I got desperate enough,* I thought.



In those moments when I desired to reach out to him, I always picked up the phone to call a friend in the Program. I'd call someone who I knew wouldn't judge me, which is most of the women and people I know in the Program. My friends that knew the situation reminded me of how crazy I felt when I was engaging with him and those who didn't know the situation told me

how much it was objectively a terrible idea. Eventually, my healthy partner and I split, and I found the courage to delete both his and Nate's numbers. I figured while I had the guts to delete one number, I might as well go for the other. I was terrified, but I felt a sense of freedom. My shoulders dropped from my ears to under my chin. The obsession to text him was removed when I

removed him permanently from my life. I was relieved. I'm not saying that relief has always happened like this or that it will ever again, but in this particular situation, magic happened. Or some Higher Power's hands.

I found then when I prayed and prayed and prayed for the willingness and talked about what I needed to do with fellows, eventually, I was willing. Eventually, the longing ceased. Sure, it wasn't perfect. I've had moments where I thought *Wouldn't it be nice if we just talked....* Though for the most part, I stopped yearning for him.

It's been a few months now since I deleted his number, and eight months since we talked. "No contact with Nate" is still on my bottom line. There are times when I want to tell my sponsor, "It'd probably be fine if we took it off my bottom line." But secretly inside I'm thinking *This would be a door open if he ever did*

reach out. I didn't block his number. Progress, not perfection, right?

It's staying on my bottom line. Having it there is a protectant for me, like a ring around me, keeping me safe. Now my dating situation is much better. I currently have "No pursuing unavailable people," on my bottom lines, meaning I can't repeat similar situations. Though that one was a real doozy.

Today I use the tool of listening to my body. If I'd have done that during my involvement with Nate, I'd have felt tightness in my chest, a hunch in my back, and sickness in my belly. Now when I feel those things, I run away from, not toward them. I choose my well-being, my peace of mind, my safety. No contact with him prevents me from relapsing into old behavior. But living in new ways helps me move toward a more healthy life.

—GINELLE T.

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The Tool of No Contact Works

My names Chelsea and I'm a recovering sex and love addict. I've been in and out of S.L.A.A. for over five years. I really committed about three years ago, but finally turned my will over on March 30th.

I have a sponsor who has a sponsor, who has a sponsor, and so on. We have all worked our Steps and I'm continually working on and within 1,2,3 and 10,11,12. I'm of service and have been 100% no contact since April 18th, after a minor slip with my qualifier.

Even after seeing my qualifier with his new qualifying partner while I was out for a topline behavior (hiking), I maintained absolutely no contact and kept my sobriety ever close.

What did that look like? Well, I had filled my God-sized hole with God prior to all of this. I was reading the Basic Text, attending meetings frequently, and getting commitments at meetings that met my schedule. This allowed me to connect with my fellows by sharing my experience, strength, and hope. I got thru the hardest thing I thought I would ever face in no contact, seeing my

abusive qualifier again, while he was with the qualifier who replaced me.

This is how I know the tools of recovery work, the tool of no contact works even stronger. All this wouldn't have been possible if I hadn't been freed from the bondage of self, and from deep attachment to my qualifier by having no contact for almost six months.

I filled the urges and the longing during no contact with things I had always wanted to do, even during a time of government-insisted isolation. I spent my time painting, writing, connecting with other women, being of service, and exercising.

What really gave me strength during no contact was every time I wanted to contact my qualifier, I would pray and say to myself, I love you, and thank you, thy will not mine be done. I would ask myself, "What do I need at this moment? What is missing from my core that I need to distract myself with someone else's core?"

This would be followed by journaling or calling someone in Program or a friend.

What came from having no contact is unbelievable. The freedom is something I never thought possible. I was given the time to do all the things I never had time or was too focused outwardly to accomplish. I continue to utilize a lot of the 11th Step and active meditation practice called breathwork.

I realized for so long in relationships I would hold my breath, waiting, or making the other shoe to drop, holding my breath at each chaotic moment that ensued.

When I started connecting to my breath, time stood in contentment. It wasn't too fast, nor too slow. I was present, focused, and willing to take the right next action. I was able to handle anything with grace and dignity that was put along my path.

When I'm connecting to my breath, this really connects me to actively working my 3rd Step. I'm actively turning my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand God: Good, Orderly, Direction. Side Note: My God isn't in the form of religion, or of male construct, my God is simple, content, loving, and calm—coming from the voices of my

fellows, literature I read, my sponsors, and the consciousness I gather from meditation and prayer.

My prayers aren't religious either. My prayer is in the form of letting go while accepting what is and what could be without me needing to control or fix it. This clarity and these tools have come from having no contact. No contact has also taught me patience, slowness, and steadiness. It offers so much space and guidance. I get to be an observer and act when appropriate, never having to regret what I said, or what I did or did not do.

The control someone else was allowed to have over me is no longer. I operate and dedicate my time and life to what best suits me — being of service, guided by my Higher Power. I walk freely, hand in hand, with something that cloaks me in accountability and freedom to do and be anything I want or need.

These tools have opened so much room in my life, where I used to be filled with so much chaos. I have now filled it with peace and enjoyment. I used to think that peace and calmness were boring. I indulge in the solitude and serenity that no

contact has offered me, allowing me a set of tools and designs for living that I feel many people also have access to but may never get a taste of because they are stuck in the cycle of chaos and the need for consistent outward fulfillment. Even for just 24 hours, I stick to my no contact rule. I'm grateful that my biggest tool

today is filling my God-sized hole with just that — God — and service to my fellows. All of these tools I have learned and acquired during no contact. I'm grateful for the freedom, solution, and recovery I get to actively participate in every day if I choose.

— CHELSEA F.

Letting Go of Contact and Gaining Clarity

Hi fellows. I'm a sex and love addict and anorectic. No contact - what a journey. I came into the Program at the end of April 2016 after a loving, but very complicated relationship ended 8 months prior. I didn't know about S.L.A.A., but I knew something wasn't right when for those 8 months, I felt like I was living in limbo. It was as if I'd given too much to the relationship, so much so that I couldn't remember how to "normally" socialize or

interact with people, or even with myself. I was also slowly recognizing that it didn't matter how much love there was for my relationship, my insecurities and manipulation tactics would always show up and destroy future relationships. Then along came S.L.A.A., which I found out about through a show I was watching. My qualifier was in a Twelve Step Program and I had always envied that. So, I had hope to find some answers in S.L.A.A.

Now, it's important that I mention that I didn't go into "no contact with a qualifier" right away as a bottom line. I wasn't ready. All I knew was that the few times my qualifier and I were in contact, it felt good and bad all at once. The truth was that I didn't know how to interact with my qualifier without trying to manipulate them. My head and body were confused, and I couldn't distinguish the love I felt from the acting out.

Three months later, my sponsor at the time said something like "I want to work with people who are willing to go to any length and I need to know if you are?" Maybe it was my codependency with my sponsor, maybe it was the challenge aspect of it, or maybe I was just ready. One thing was certain, I needed to gain clarity through space and time, so I said OK.

I can't really remember how I told my qualifier, but the idea was that we wouldn't be in contact for a year and this was necessary for the situation to move forward. It wasn't going to be easy, but I was tired of being confused and this would simplify things for a while. My mistake was to assume that my qualifier would understand

how hard this would be for the both of us and would respect my wish, so I didn't even think of blocking their email. When I got an email after 8 months of no contact, you better believe I was furious.

I thought, *Don't they think this is hard for me too?! Now I must sit with the fact that I'm not going to answer them and it's creating a whole new situation... What a rotten deal!*" (and this is the clean version of my thinking). I called my sponsor and got through this one by reminding myself that this was a commitment to my sobriety being tested. I wrapped up the situation by blocking their email.

A year later, I used a tool called the clarity exercise (aka pros and cons) to see if I was ready to make contact. I was still working through my Steps and I was just not ready for contact. So, I waited. A few months later, I made my Step 8 list of amends. My qualifier was number two on my list. I did the clarity exercise. But I still didn't feel that I trusted myself to make contact without trying to manipulate them. I decided I was okay making living amends for now and committed to change my

behaviors in future dating/relationships. Today, if I go through all my Step work notebooks from the first three years, I bet I can find at least 7 clarity exercises on whether to contact my qualifier to make direct amends. The desire to contact my qualifier would come back periodically. Sometimes it was when I travelled, other times it would be when I would feel improvements in my recovery journey. And there were times when it was just a lingering desire that I had to put more thought into, in order to let it go.

When the thought to contact my qualifier came to me, my sponsor had me do clarity exercises to identify in writing my motives, expectations, fears, and the consequences. The 24-48 hours following the written exercise enabled me to turn to my HP, ground myself and reveal the decision that felt best to me. This is a tool that I use for many things, and I recommend doing it twice: one for the action I want to take and one for its counteraction. For example: to contact my qualifier to make an amends and to not contact my qualifier

to make an amends. Different things come out with each action. Fast-forward to five years later, I visited my family for the summer and when I came back, I had in mind that I wanted to make direct amends and maybe see if my qualifier was available for a different relationship.

I told my sponsor about my idea, mentioning that I wanted to take my time with this process so that I stayed grounded throughout. My sponsor had reconnected with her qualifier in sobriety, so I trusted that she would support me and keep me real in the process. It took me two months to get ready, write the amends again, engage in contact with my qualifier, and another three weeks to connect by phone (they lived 2500 miles away). I made sure I prepared myself to deal with the inevitable triggers by developing guidelines (e.g. bookending with sponsor, exercise, give it time, phone calls with sponsees, service, and feel my feelings).

What an experience! The phone call itself went OK. What I noticed was how nervous (fearful) I was and telling them some of the things

I'd done when we were in a relationship was not as small of a deal as I'd anticipated. I was glad to be out with this. Furthermore, through the preemptive work and some of the things my qualifier said, I now realize that I don't feel that this person and I are compatible.

Grudges are being held for keeping no contact and the choices I've made to stay sober and grow in sobriety is nothing that I want to feel guilty about. This was one of the hardest things I had to do, and I don't have to explain myself for doing what I needed to do to be one more emotionally sober

person on this planet. I don't know what the future holds for me, but S.L.A.A. has provided solutions to my challenges so far. To wrap up, one thing that this program has reminded me of is the power of giving time and space to grow in any situation.

I truly believe in the power of letting things sort themselves out by giving it time, which is something that I know some of my sponsees don't always like, heck I even struggle with it! Time is another expression of HP and proves to me that I'm not the one in charge here.

-ANONYMOUS, MONTREAL



Definition of a Qualifier – One of the Tools of No Contact

One of my bottom lines is “no contact with qualifiers.” I am currently single, and I believe that thoughts of contacting someone from my past can be very pervasive on lonely days when I am not spiritually fit. I need to be vigilant about what that bottom line really means for me.

When I came into S.L.A.A. in September 2018, it was loosely defined. Unconsciously or not, I had not put much weight into its meaning. I do know that it was a rather vague concept at that time. I honestly thought, “How hard could it be?” Wow! Was I in denial or what?

What was my definition of a qualifier in the beginning? He was someone who hurt me physically, emotionally and sexually. In my long list of past lovers, the number of them who hurt me in this way are few. I would stay away from them. I could do that. I also included the men I had kept as “friends with benefits.” These were guys who I was always available for or those I knew I could call on for a sexual hit. I

knew at my root that I could not contact them because they not only triggered my sex addict but my love and fantasy addict as well. They fueled that romantic intrigue of thinking maybe one day things would unfold into something more. It was that belief that kept me hung up and coming back for more even when I knew it was futile and that it caused me such despair once we were apart. I had been looking for a way out of that cycle and never knew how but this bottom line made it possible. No friends with benefits! Check!

It was by no means a simple endeavour. Many of these men I had known and been involved with for more than 5 years. They made plenty of cameos in between relationships I had with other men. They were my fail-safes. It was painful. The idea of not having my plan-B was frightening. I had tied my existence and self worth to these few men always being there. Coming into S.L.A.A. helped give me the strength to finally acknowledge that being tied to them this closely was scarier than letting them go.

That attachment made my life unmanageable in ways I could not have imagined.

You know what helps when I feel the tug to reach out in recovery? I imagine a beautiful day off work where I have all these lovely plans set for the day. During this imaginary day, I get a knock on my door. I had no plans with anyone. It was a simple day of exquisite self care and lo and behold, at my doorstep is an unexpected guest, someone who throws a wrench in my day, in my thoughts. My mood shifts. This imaginary person is someone who did not even think to call or text first. What an unpleasant feeling. And, if I put myself in the position of that unexpected guest, who am I to pop up into one of my exes' lives unexpected and uninvited because of my own selfish needs? This shows no regard for that other person's plans. Do I want to be that person again in recovery? No, I do not. I have that choice today.

What about the rest of the long list I mentioned earlier? Not all of my qualifiers fell into the category of abusive or "friends with benefits." Let me tell you about my recent slip on this bottom line. Please note that through reworking my *40 Questions* and completing the

Renewal of Sobriety pamphlet with my sponsor, I was able to see how the slip happened and the factors that contributed to it. I had not been fully honest with my sponsor, myself and my Higher Power for months.

I was engaging actively in my accessory behaviors. i.e. fantasy as well as reading increasingly erotic literature which at that time had not been included in my bottom-line behaviors. I was struggling with my program and putting on a brave face. I had started dating because it felt like the "right" time after a year and a few months in program. I was not ready to date but did so out of a sense of obligation (to whom I could not really tell you). I did not know how to effectively communicate that with my sponsor.

I had had one date with a man who I connected with on an intellectual level but was shocked to my core by his appearance. It was quite traumatic for me. I thought I was vain for thinking appearance mattered that much to me which in turn started a shame spiral that lasted days. After much talk about the experience with my sponsor in S.L.A.A., my sponsor in my other fellowship, and my therapist, I

decided to get back to dating. A week later, I slipped. I was at dinner with a fellow S.L.A.A. member and got a ping on my cellphone from a past lover. Ritchie! My heart started palpitating, my mouth went dry. It felt like that moment in every romantic movie where the guy that got away finally returns.

He did not fall into my loosely defined qualifiers list. I would soon learn that he holds his own category. I did not message right away upon the advice of the member I was with. I opted to use my dating guidelines around messaging on the app to set up contact the next morning. I had a gut feeling this was not right, but I had no defenses at this point — at least not any I could not just rationalize away — and rationalize I did.

As I was talking to him through this app, my HP was at work. I spoke to two people that day who I feel close to. One was my sponsor in another fellowship and the other my long-time friend who is not in program. Both kept asking me to look at how my brief relationship with Ritchie went. “Play the tape forward,” an adage I have heard and used myself in the beverage program but could not drum

up for myself in this. Something shifted from speaking to these women. Memories of our time spent together moved from a romantic glow to a clearer imagine of the reality of what it was like.

The affair happened while I was on another break from an abusive relationship. It lasted no more than 3 weeks of which had been filled with booze, weed and nonstop sexual activity. There was over disclosure galore! I engaged in exhibitionism. After he accused me of giving him an STI (I was clean by the way), he ghosted me. I had ghosted guys before but never had I been on the receiving end. I fell into what I know now as withdrawal. I was obsessed for years with either trying to find him or recreate the connection with another. No other lover had ever measured up. After a brief encounter, a few years later at a festival I was attending with my sister, what did I do? I dropped everything to be with him for one more night. Then silence once more. The pedestal I had placed him on was far reaching.

Oh, that tape! The insanity that one man can bring me to. I am powerless over sex and love addiction and it makes my

life unmanageable. Did I want to go back to that? Did I even want to chance it? When I had first received his message, I would have. Through my HP working through others, I was able to understand that no, I do not want to go back to that. I could not rationalize away my sobriety for a “what if.” My contact with him lasted less than 24 hours. I called my sponsor the next day and recommitted to my sobriety.

I got honest with my sponsor, myself, and most importantly with my Higher Power. I set about really looking at this word “qualifier.”

Based on my recent experience, I added anyone whom I obsessed over and put on a pedestal or made my Higher Power — anyone who I lost myself in or who could make me want to be consumed wholly and completely. I thought I had a clear definition by this point. The amazing thing about recovery in S.L.A.A. that I have learned is that my definitions cannot be fixed. They are fluid as I encounter more situations that push my existing views, thoughts, and actions.

Shortly after my slip, I received a voicemail from a qualifier. He was someone I had known for years and slept

with after being worn down by his advances. I always knew that he liked me and wanted more. He put me on a pedestal, and I basked under his adoration. Oh, glorious validation! I had a choice between listening to it or letting it expire in my voicemail. I chose to listen to it. I did not feel the same hit I usually did though. I was left sad, confused, and angry.

Through talking with my sponsor and doing a clarity exercise (aka Pros/Cons), I concluded that I no longer wanted or needed his validation. Listening to his voicemail did not serve me. If anything, it put me in a position to morbidly reflect on how I used him and brought me shame. Not listening to it in the future would save me from this spiral. This fact felt foreign and uncomfortable. However, knowing that when I get to the part in my Steps where I will be prepared to make an amends is a consolation. Reminding myself that my Higher Power gives me the validation that I seek relieves me from shame. I need no longer seek it from men. I am enough.

My definition of a qualifier started as a loosely defined word but by the grace of my

Higher Power it has grown into a word that I can respect. It is more than a word. It encompasses people and behaviors I need to avoid in order to remain sober. My definition of a qualifier may change as I experience more in recovery.

I have the tools today to face those changes. I understand that the consequences of contacting a qualifier outweighs the payoffs today. This is truly a gift!

Definition or qualities of a qualifier:

- Abusive partners
- Anyone who I could not say “no” to
- Anyone who I would not want to say no to
- Anyone I obsessed over and/or made my HP
- Anyone I lose myself in or want to be consumed by
- Anyone I used for validation
- Anyone I know who would not say no to me

— ANONYMOUS

My Journey to Find the Truth

When I first came into S.L.A.A. in January 2019, I had no idea what no contact or qualifier meant. I knew I had a problem with relationships, and I knew I was dating people that were not healthy for me, yet I could not stop. I went to a couple of meetings here and there, thinking that “this is not really for me.” Until November same year when I hit a rock bottom. I still didn’t know what was going on, but I knew I needed help. I started attending meetings on a daily basis and during one of these meetings I

found someone that could be my sponsor. We started doing the first 7 questions to find out, by the end of it, that I was in a relationship which had all the signs of love addiction. I was in shock and couldn’t accept that. Yet I knew that life as it was couldn’t go on. On day one I let the person know that I would not contact him for the next 30 days and there I started my journey to find the truth about myself.

I started feeling the withdrawals of no contact very quickly. A sense of emptiness and discomfort was present

within me. The most powerful tool which helped me from the start has been the clarity of setting bottom and top lines. Having the clarity of what I could and could not do, to begin with, helped me to stay with whatever feeling was coming up and not let my mind trick me into the “it won’t hurt you, if” game. Once that was clear I just had to stick with it for the next 30 days. *Just...* That’s where the other tools of recovery came to help. Having a daily call with my sponsor allowed me to find some breathing space within the pain I was feeling. I used the tools of writing and reading on a daily basis and went on an exploration of the nature of my disease. Denial has been part of my story and the truths I came to discover through working the steps were not the most pleasant ones, yet they were the gateway to a new freedom.

Thanks to the daily contact with other fellows who had the same withdrawal symptoms, I could find hope and serenity. In struggle, I’d pick up the phone and share with someone what was going on.

Working the steps, one day at a time, helped me to uncover the limiting beliefs which were making my life small and were blocking me

from my Higher Power. As a result, I reached a new level of awareness and my life enriched in a way I would have never thought of. I finished a course which I started six years ago, but hadn’t finished because of my disease. I dived into my creativity and explored all the things that bring me joy. Slowly I found a stronger and deeper connection with my Higher Power. Being “alone” didn’t scare me as much and quickly I found that my Higher Power was communicating with me in meditation as well as through other people and through synchronicities. I am practising meditation on a daily basis together with yoga and morning pages. I live a creative and positive life, my social life expanded, but most of all my relationship with myself changed radically. I am in the process of making a big change in my career and I can say that clarity and mindfulness is part of my daily life today. At times it goes, and this is where I know I can use the tools of the programme, pen and paper, meditation, and outreach calls, as well as going to a meeting and being of service to others.

I am grateful for S.L.A.A. and the tools we have in the programme.

— ELENA

Flirting With Bottom Lines

I had always been a flirt. I enjoyed the attention which would often lead to intrigue and fantasy. I recognized my sex and love addiction after I found myself in a sexual and emotional relationship outside of my marriage. It started with a seemingly innocent text which became flirtatious and then escalated.

I knew the relationship was wrong and totally against my morals but I could not stop. "One last time" became a recurring theme. After almost every encounter with my qualifier (Q), I would say to myself (and to him) that these meetings had to stop.

He would say "O.K., I love you and I just want you to be happy." He would leave me alone but my fantasies would continue. This created a disconnect between me, my husband and the rest of my real life.

The pain of my addiction would inevitably lead me to contact Q again and the cycle would continue. I finally found S.L.A.A. and committed to the program. I met a wonderful recovery partner (S) who was truly the most valuable part of

my early days in the program. She also had a qualifier. We were going through withdrawal at the same time and we were able to relate on so many levels. We were able to support each other with love and laughter. Her "no contact" bottom line was so impressive to me.

I was not ready to go there! "No initiating contact" was MY bottom line. I was convinced that my caring Q would continue to leave me alone and that one day we could be friends. I went to 90 meetings in 90 days, found a sponsor and started Step work. So much time and effort invested in my recovery and yet I maintained an internal dialogue ... "What happens if I run into him? What will he say? What will I say?"

This voice in my head just kept the addiction alive in me. When I was nearly 3 months sober, Q located me as I was walking my dogs in my neighborhood. Contact was initiated by him so we chatted.

Relapse was almost immediate. I felt remorse and sought his help. I explained my identification as a Sex & Love Addict and briefed him on the

program. I trusted that he would do the right thing. I went back to program work and maintained my bottom line of “no initiating contact.”

A few months later, Q saw me and called out to me in a grocery store parking lot. Our short (mostly one sided) conversation kept me “in my head” for days afterward. I acted out by contacting him (to ask him to stop going to my gym!) and another relapse followed. I recommitted to the program once again. I revisited Step One and acknowledged my powerlessness. I knew that it would be helpful to change my bottom line but I couldn't imagine life without the opportunity of connection with Q. I went to meetings and listened carefully to others who struggled with their Q's. It was so clear to me, as an outsider, that “no contact” would be the answer for THEIR sobriety.

But I could not accept the idea for myself. My sponsor suggested that I pray for willingness. This prayer turned out to be the most important tool for my recovery. At first the prayer was just words. I was asking for something that I didn't even want!

But eventually I truly meant what I was saying. After

several months of praying and sobriety, Q initiated contact numerous times!

I never replied. My addict loved the attention. I originally interpreted his actions as an indication of his love. He wanted to be with me; he couldn't stay away. Thankfully, my Higher Power was there to protect me. My prayers had given me clarity! I realized that my relationship with Q had been made of fantasy. I did not really know this man.

I had only seen what I wanted to see in him. I had ignored all the red flags because they didn't fit my ideal fantasy. Now he was showing his true colors. I recognized that my recovery could not be in someone else's hands.

I couldn't expect to be saved by Q or anyone else. I was responsible for my own sobriety. Now was the time! I changed my bottom line to “no contact.” Relief followed. I would no longer have anxiety over an imagined future conversation and its consequences.

There would be no contact, therefore no conversation! As one of the S.L.A.A. promises states: “While vigilance was still important, the choices we had to make now seemed

easier.” YES!! No more “what if” thinking. My mind could relax in regards to a possible run-in with Q.

There would be no contact. Period! There was only one choice! Unfortunately, there were other ways for my brain to take me to a place of anxiety and fantasy. I needed to reduce the opportunity for having intrusive thoughts of Q. I needed more support.

I was introduced to “The Gift of No Contact” booklet (S.L.A.A. Conference-Approved Literature) which contains an enormous amount of wisdom. I identified with the notion that ANY form of contact could send me reeling back into euphoric recall, longing and the urge to act out.

I needed to avoid it at all costs. So, I blocked all ways for Q to contact me — phone, email, messaging apps, etc. I deleted photos of him, disposed of the gifts he had given me, refrained from looking for him on social media and cancelled my gym membership (finally).

This helped to calm the obsessive thoughts and allowed me and my husband to settle back into an open, honest, comfortable, loving relationship.

My husband was now aware of my history with Q. He likened the situation to a war. He said we needed to do anything to win this war. I didn’t really understand what he meant.

One morning my husband and I were enjoying a morning walk with the dogs and we saw Q jog by. We ignored him. The dogs were thirsty so we stopped on the sidewalk to give them some water. Q went out of his way to jog right past us on the same sidewalk and said “Hey guys!”

He was so close he nearly stepped on one of my dogs! His face was probably 16 inches away from mine. All this happened during the COVID-19 Pandemic when social distancing was crucial. I was shocked by the disrespect.

I never thought that he would intentionally do something to harm me (emotionally or physically). It was as if it were a game to him and that he was a spoiled little boy that would do anything to get what he wanted. My addict spent countless hours trying to understand/explain/deny this nonsensical behavior.

Q was back in my head once again (perhaps his plan?). My husband was right. This WAS a

war! If I went back to my addictive life I would lose everything: my husband, my job, the respect of my family and friends, and possibly my own life.

This was serious. After more prayer, My Higher Power sent me straight to my sponsor who had plenty of experience, strength and hope in regards to her own qualifier.

She agreed with the “war theory” of my husband. She explained that she thought of her qualifier as a deadly, raging forest fire that could engulf her.

Wow! Yes. Q is deadly to me! The image I conjured: Q holding a gun aimed straight at me and my family.

It wasn't a stretch as Q had spent years in an occupation which often required a gun. More clarity.

The fantasy world of my addiction began to fade and over time I was able to be more present for my husband, family, friends, work and my dogs (not necessarily in that order. ;) A recovery partner

recently asked me, “When did you know you were getting better?” I explained that I recognized myself while reading The S.L.A.A. Signs of Recovery — especially the 4th Sign which states: “We learn to avoid situations that may put us at risk physically, morally, psychologically or spiritually.” That is basically my “no contact” bottom line!

Post script: Not long after writing this article, Q pulled up in his car behind mine at a stop light. He waved. The choice was easy: I pretended I didn't see. At the next red light he pulled up next to me. I felt vulnerable, especially since I was in my convertible with the top down. The choice was easy: I did not look his way. It was the longest red light of my life. But when it turned green I sped away.

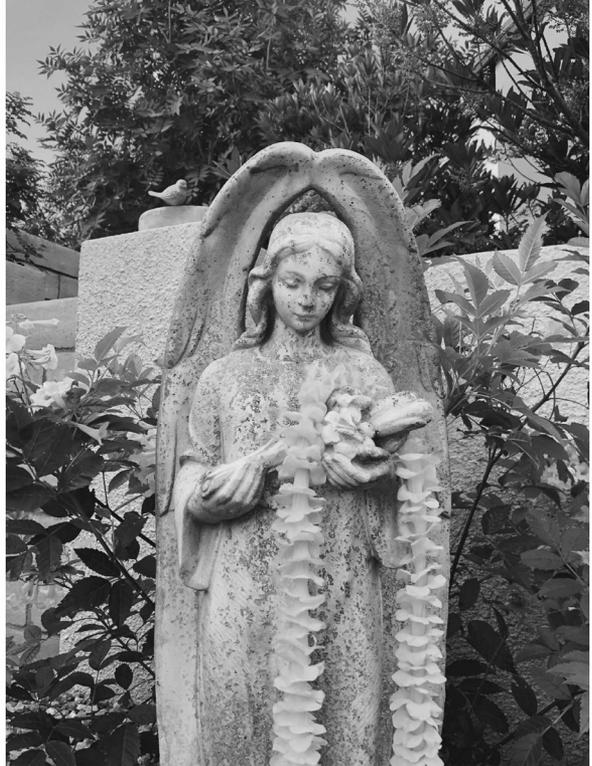
The experience jarred me a bit but it did not take hold of my day. I was able to move on and realized that I had received “the gift of no contact!”

— KIM B.

Share space

I made a lei
for my sponsor
with flowers
from my garden.
It was my way of
showing
gratitude for all
she has done for
me. :)

When I make
a lei, I pray for
the person for
whom it is being
made. I thanked
my Higher
Power for
introducing me
to S.L.A.A.,
where I found
such a
wonderful
program and the
perfect sponsor
for me.



I thanked Him for her sobriety and her service (especially to me). I could not deliver the lei in person because of our long distance and the COVID-19 pandemic. I placed the lei on an angel statue in my yard and took a photograph.

I am submitting this picture for possible use in *the Journal*.
Thank you for offering opportunities for service. :)

— KIM B.



THE INSPIRATION LINE

Your 24-Hour Sponsor

215-574-2120

CELEBRATES

400,000 CALLS!

Greater Delaware Valley Intergroup, originators of the Inspiration Line want to thank Fellowship Wide Services and the Journal for supporting the Inspiration Line. GDVI wants to acknowledge the 15 volunteers from all over the US & Canada that leave inspirational messages on the Line and credit them for making this huge milestone possible: Alicia, California, Alyce, Montreal Canada, Alyson, Pennsylvania, Bob, Pennsylvania, Brenda, Maryland/Florida, John, Florida, Kip, Connecticut, Leah, New York, Mark, New Mexico, Matt, Pennsylvania, Michael S., Pennsylvania, Mike M., Pennsylvania, Natalie, Pennsylvania, Rich, Massachusetts, Sean, New Mexico, Shelly, New York, Steve D, Pennsylvania and Zoe, Pennsylvania

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.



the Journal