

THE OUTER CIRCLE

Carrying the message of hope to the still-suffering sex addict since 1988

THOUGHTS ON STEP ELEVEN: PRAYER AND MEDITATION

PLUS

- * Step Guide
- * Tyranny of Expectations
- * Tradition Eleven
- * ISO News: The 2024 convention needs a host city

The Newsletter of SAA's International Service Organization





International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

TOC articles contain the experiences and opinions of individual SAA members and do not represent the official views or positions of the ISO of SAA, Inc. or the SAA fellowship as a whole.

© Copyright 2022 International Service Organization of SAA, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Except for the purpose of redistributing *The Outer Circle* as a whole, *The Outer Circle* may not be downloaded, copied, reproduced, duplicated, or conveyed in any other way without the express written permission of the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

* Registered Trademark Sex Addicts Anonymous and the SAA logo are registered trademarks of the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

The Outer Circle Mission

The mission of *The Outer Circle* is to provide information from the ISO and to share the experience, strength, and hope members have obtained from working the SAA program of recovery. As the first iteration put it in 1988, *The Outer Circle* newsletter “carries the message of hope to the sex addict who still suffers” — especially prisoners and others who don’t have the Internet.

Through *TOC*, SAA members contribute articles and poems that focus on working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. It also communicates ISO news, regional activities, and other items of interest.

SAA meetings are encouraged to reproduce *TOC* at no charge and display it alongside other SAA literature. To keep costs down, please print out the on-line version.

If you have comments or suggestions, please see contact information on page 30. To have an article considered for publication, see our Submission Guidelines on page 31.

To ensure that future issues can be offered without cost, please consider making a tax-deductible donation now to support publication of the newsletter.

CONTENTS

Columns

- 4 From the Editor
- 5 From the Director
- 6 Dear Grace
- 15 Living in Sobriety
- 20 Dear Will
- 22 Stories of Service
- 25 From the Board

Departments

- 2 TOC Mission
- 9 Poem: Giving Up
- 27 ISO News
- 30 Calendar
- 30 Contact ISO
- 31 Submissions
- 32 Twelve Steps

Share *The Outer Circle* with your recovery friends in SAA and encourage them to submit their experience, strength, and hope (see page 31).

Feature Articles



FOLLOW
THESE
STEPS

- 8 Help write a step guide
There is a need for a guide to work the steps. You can contribute!



- 10 Prayer and meditation
One member's experience, strength, and hope working Step Eleven



- 13 Tyranny of expectations
Resetting our thinking about what we expect of ourselves and others.



- 18 Roots of Tradition Eleven
Exploring the foundations of the Twelve Traditions: Tradition Eleven

FROM THE EDITOR

Give us your ES&H and leave the rest to us

BY DON S.
THE OUTER CIRCLE
EDITOR

TOC@saa-recovery.org

*If you have
experience,
strength, and
hope, you have an
article. We'll take
care of the rest.
Making sure the
writing is "good"
is our job.*

Got ES&H? (Hint: yes, you do!) Please share it with us! Email toc@saa-recovery.org or go to saa-recovery.org/submit-to-toc

Welcome to the fall issue. This issue of *The Outer Circle*, like every issue, is simply a collection of our experience, strength, and hope. As near as I can tell, the expression first occurs in the foreword to the third edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Like so many examples in twelve-step recovery, the phrase's wording stands up to scrutiny.

The first batter in the lineup is *experience*. *Strength* and *hope* come as we gain experience living sober, cleaning house, and finding ways to be of service. Experience is the key to strength and hope.

It's the same with the expression "Live and Let Live." The first order of business is to live—get a life. Personally, when I am fully engaged in my own life in an ever-expanding outer circle, I am less likely to get wrapped around the axle by what others do.

I mention this because, in my first year as editor, there have been multiple times when I asked a member of our fellowship to consider contributing to *The Outer Circle*. An all-too-frequent response is something like, "Oh, but I'm not an accomplished writer; I wouldn't have anything worth saying." The second part couldn't be further from the truth. **All that is really needed is ES&H, your ES&H. That's all.**

Making sure the writing is "good" is our job. As editor, I work to preserve the author's voice while making sure the content is appropriate (non-trigerring, etc.) and stylistically correct. In addition, a group of volunteers reviews my edits before anything gets passed on to the office. We are all here to be of service to contributors and to the fellowship as a whole. And we're all on your side.

If you have ES&H, you have an article. We'll take care of the rest.

And please, make the article as long as you want or can. It's much easier to remove unnecessary material than to read your mind and fill in missing pieces.

How do we carry the message to the still-suffering addict? We share our experience, strength, and hope. Please share yours!

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Finances, the Conference, and area service work

**BY PAUL M.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ISO OF SAA, INC.**

DIRECTOR@SAA-ISO.NET

While the area structure will take time to work, service at the area level is essential for the Conference to hear the voice of the fellowship.

Hello, my friends in recovery. As the end of the year approaches and we leave a time of financial uncertainty, I hope we have a brighter future. A new person (not yet named by press time) will be taking over as executive director. I am thankful for all the support the fellowship has given the ISO office and me. I have gratitude for serving the fellowship these last few years as your Board trustee and then the executive director. We hope we have as generous a fellowship in December as we have had over the last many years.

Regarding the financial situation, we had a wonderful response to our appeal in August and September. We have significantly reduced the financial losses the ISO office endured in the early part of this year with increased donations and reduction of expenses. I have always seen our fellowship respond to an appeal when we are transparent with our financial issues. I hope we can be more transparent in the future.

The 2022 virtual Conference meeting went fast. All of the motions passed. However, too few areas are sending delegates. The ISO committees will be working with groups to find out what is working and what is not working. Of the eighty-seven areas, sixty have created an area assembly, but only thirty-seven registered a delegate. That's only 43% of areas and 62% of area assemblies that sent a delegate. While the area structure will take time to work, service at the area level is essential for the Conference to hear the voice of the fellowship.

It is bittersweet that I leave the position of executive director. I do have plans for my next adventure in life, and I hope I leave the ISO office in good hands.

Thank you for letting me serve.

DEAR GRACE

Reinvigorating our program

BY WOMEN'S
OUTREACH
COMMITTEE

*Rather than going
to meetings to
find something for
yourself, consider
what you can bring.*

Dear Grace,

I usually love my meeting, but lately, it feels like everyone there is struggling in recovery. I'm not excited to go to meetings anymore, and I sometimes leave feeling worse than when I arrived. What can I do to find the experience, strength, and hope in recovery when it feels like all my recovery friends are on shaky ground?

Looking for ES&H

Dear Looking,

Thanks for this question! Many of us have gone through periods where we felt alone. In fact, we can think of it as a feature of our addiction. When we feel different, isolated, and perhaps overwhelmed, it can become a trigger for acting out.

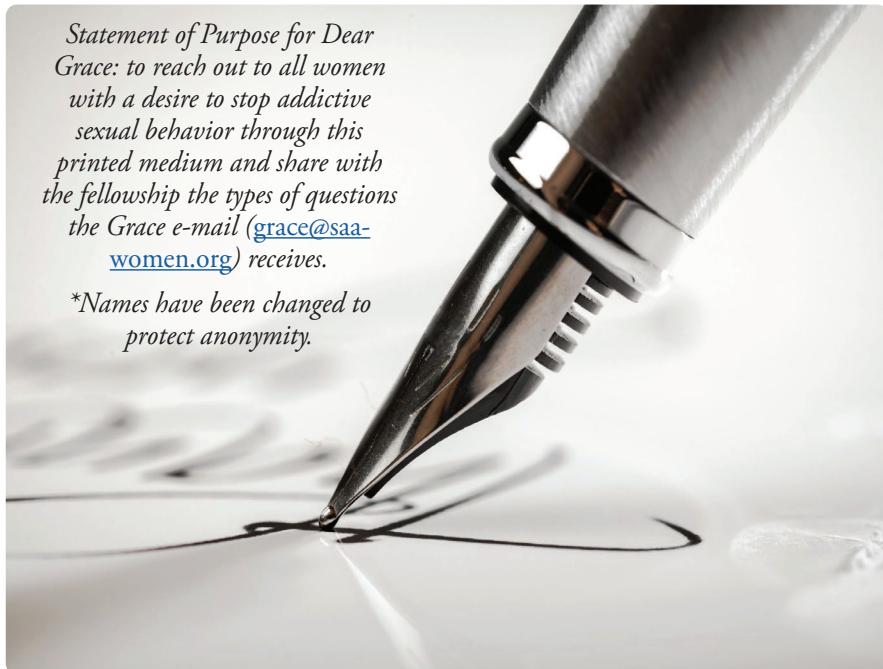
It's also a feature of recovery that, no matter your experience, you are never alone: "Discovering that we are not alone is a liberating experience for us. It is a great comfort and relief to know that a fellowship of recovering sex addicts exists and that we have somewhere to turn to help us recover" (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 10). Recovery is a lifelong journey; there are bound to be good times and not-so-good times. The key is to go through them, to continue to move forward without becoming complacent during the good times or becoming stuck or giving up during the challenges.

Here are some ideas that have worked for some of us. These are all suggestions:

Tap into the richness of the program. Increase the breadth and depth of where you're looking. Try other meetings. Gather phone numbers for other members and call them. Join the Grace List. (See our column in the last issue of *The Outer Circle* for how to join.)

Statement of Purpose for Dear Grace: to reach out to all women with a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior through this printed medium and share with the fellowship the types of questions the Grace e-mail (grace@saa-women.org) receives.

**Names have been changed to protect anonymity.*



Please remember that you and your recovery friends are just one small part of a long history of people walking this path. Those who have gone before us have left behind a great wealth of experience, strength, and hope that is accessible to all of us now. Go to the SAA website, download literature, and read it. Listen to recordings of past convention workshops and speakers.

Re-think your relationship to meetings. Rather than going to meetings to find something for yourself, consider what you can bring. Look outside yourself for who you can help. Is there a newcomer attending their first meeting? Is someone coming back from a relapse?

Maybe a fellow member has lost a pet, a family member, a job, or a relationship. Can I give them some time after the meeting and share my phone number?

Re-connect to our primary purpose: to carry the message of recovery to the addict who is still suffering. Acknowledge when you are the one suffering, and ask for help.

You did that with this letter, and that's why we were excited to see your question. We hope our suggestions are helpful.

**In service,
Grace**

Help write the SAA step guide



BY JIM P.

It has long been a request of many in the fellowship that the ISO develop and publish a Step Guide to provide a basic structure to help both sponsors and sponsees comprehensively and methodically work through our SAA program. For many, particularly newcomers, it can be intimidating, if not downright confusing, to make sense of a phrase such as, “Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity,” much less how to “work” such a step.

I serve on the Step Guide subcommittee of the Literature Committee, and our charge is to compile such a document for use by the fellowship. This project, in one form or another, has been proceeding for a decade. Different formats have been proposed, but in general, our committee thinks that each step should contain an introduction that defines critical terms and phrases, followed by a series of questions and exercises.

So, for the First Step—“We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior—that our lives had become unmanageable.”—we defined terms such as “powerlessness” and “unmanageability” in the context of our program. Next, we included some pertinent quotes from Sex Addicts Anonymous. That was followed by a paragraph or two of practical advice for sponsors. Finally, we included a list of almost a hundred questions and exercises which allow for a very comprehensive exploration of what it means to thoroughly explore this step, followed by a brief conclusion. We call it “Step One Guide for Sponsors.” We did the same format for Step Two but had around sixty-five questions. For Step Three, we had twelve questions and thirteen exercises.

We received a great deal of input from the fellowship regarding how to work Steps One through Three. Now we need your help with the remaining steps. As a committee, we do not want to impose a step workbook on our members.

Instead, we want to take your ideas and then organize and collate them into a useful document for all. But we cannot do it without your suggestions.

As a sponsor, how do you work the steps with sponsees? What questions do you ask? Does your group have an organized format you would be willing to share? If so, please submit it to the Literature Committee so our subgroup can include it in our ongoing efforts. Please remember to submit only your, or your group's, original content. We cannot utilize the work of other twelve-step organizations or copyrighted materials.

You can submit your contributions by mail to the ISO of SAA, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270; by email to info@saa-recovery.org; or online at <https://saa-recovery.org/submit>. Please include a general release form which can be found in each issue of *The Outer Circle*, downloaded at https://saa-recovery.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/General_Release_Editable.pdf, and is included in the online submission form. ☺

Giving Up

Deborah A. UK

I knew I could give him up
It was my choice,
I chose not to.

I knew I could give him up
And I did, but it hurt.
I needed the pain.

I knew I could give him up
Until I was lonely and
begged to come back.

I knew I could give him up
Until my body jumped
With every text.

I knew I could give him up.
I'd make him laugh
"I'm addicted to you."

I knew I could give him up
Did I?
I didn't want to.

Then I gave up.
I gave up fighting and lying.
I gave up hiding and found SAA.

I worked to give him up
One phone call, one meeting,
One day at a time.

I trusted I could give him up
Even when it hurt
Only one call away.

I knew I could give him up
I am happy,
I am joyous, and I am free.



Conscious Contact with God Through Prayer and Meditation

BY DAMON R.

Before I made it to recovery, prayer and meditation were out of reach. Meditation was a foreign concept that I didn't have time to learn, let alone practice. Looking back, I know that was just an excuse. After all, I could always find time to act out.

I would pray occasionally, but only in moments of desperation. I can hardly call that prayer. It was just a one-sided attempt to keep my secrets hidden. I was trying to negotiate with God. Since my secrets made me sick, it is no surprise that these attempts ultimately failed. God doesn't want me to be sick, and God doesn't negotiate. I had to hit rock bottom, with all of my secrets exposed, to figure that out.

There I was, alone in a world turned upside-down by my acting-out behavior. My family, my career, my social network, and the life I worked so hard to build were gone. Once again, in desperation, I turned to God, only this time, I had nothing left to bargain with. For the first time in my life, I had a conversation with God, and for the first time, I actually heard a response. God asked me to surrender.

What a concept! All this time, I thought I could make deals as if God were a used car salesman. I used manipulation and false promises but never willingly gave myself over...until now.

This was the first of many spiritual awakenings that I would experience, and it was the birth of my conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation. I know now that it was not the first time God had spoken to me, but it was the first time I had listened, and listening made all the difference.

At God's direction, I set out on a new path. That path led me to a therapist who introduced me to the term "sex addiction" and led me to my first SAA meeting. During this time, I read articles and books about prayer and meditation in an attempt to maintain the connection I had made with my higher power.

Combining different ideas and techniques from these sources, I began crafting my own personal practice of prayer and meditation, thus strengthening my conscious contact with each day that passed. My practice continues to evolve and my connection grows as I learn new ideas through spiritual work both inside and outside the program.

Much like defining our own abstinence, it is up to us to find the right prayer and meditation practices that will best connect us to God as we understand God. In addition to reading books and articles, I used guided meditations and relied upon the suggestions of others in the program, as well as program materials, to get me started.

Here are some ideas and techniques that I found to be helpful on my journey:

- » **Practice Brings Progress:** In SAA we learn to focus on progress, not perfection. Committing to a daily routine of prayer and meditation made it easier to quiet my mind over time. What once seemed impossible has become an integral part of my life and continues to strengthen my conscious contact with God. I suggest setting aside twenty minutes each day in a quiet place where you can relax your body and mind. Start with a simple prayer, like the serenity prayer, and add more over time.
- » **Remain Heart Focused:** My mind is where my addict and my ego dwell. Together, they attempt to hijack my every emotion, take advantage of my character defects, and reignite the insanity of my disease. My heart, on the other hand, is the dwelling place of my higher power. That's why, when I pray and meditate, I do so with a "heart focus." In my breathing practice, I allow healing breath energy to fill my heart. As I exhale, I let out negative energies, making more room for God. I have also found that the best way to clear my mind and to hear the voice of my higher power is to focus on and listen to my heartbeat while practicing my prayer and meditation routine.
- » **Thoughts Are Things:** If my goal is to maintain a constant conscious contact with God, I must be mindful of my thoughts. I firmly believe that what I give the universe, I will receive tenfold. Negative thoughts bring negativity into my life, desire

creates lack, hatred brings sorrow, and so on. That's why I try to keep my thoughts positive and, when I slip into negative thought patterns, I ask my higher power for the strength to do better.

All this time, I thought I could make deals as if God were a used car salesman. I used manipulation and false promises but never willingly gave myself over...until now.

- » Be Grateful: Building on the thought that we get what we give, I have found that being grateful brings two benefits: (i) an inner peace that my higher power responds to, and (ii) the mindfulness necessary to feel God's presence. In addition to being grateful for life's obvious gifts, I am grateful for the not-so-obvious ones, and even more so for the challenges and the darkest moments that once would have had me questioning the very existence of a higher power. My higher power makes no mistakes, so I view every challenging moment as an opportunity and a gift.
- » AMENDED: Share My Blessings: In addition to being grateful for everything that each moment presents, I have found it helpful to "bless" everything as well. As a child of God, I know that, with guidance, I can share the love that is so freely given to me. From the food that I eat to the hands that prepared it, offering gratitude and love brings me closer to my higher power. In prayer and meditation, I can also pass this love on to my loved ones and my adversaries alike. Throughout the day, with each thought that passes about a person, place, or thing, I pay a blessing forward wherever it fits. I can do this because I know that I myself am blessed to be in conscious contact with my higher power at this very moment.

As someone who never believed he could "figure out" how to meditate and who often wondered if God was there, I could hardly imagine achieving the conscious contact with my higher power that I enjoy today. It's nothing short of a miracle. But, then again, anything is possible through the Twelve Steps of SAA and conscious contact with God. ◎

Host city still needed for 2024 convention!

The ISO is still in need of a host city for its 2024 convention. Local groups, intergroups, and areas need to step up and place a bid, otherwise there may not be a convention in 2024! To learn more or to place a bid, email info@saa-recovery.org or call 713-869-4902.



BY JIM L

One of the most subtle and pernicious aspects of my addiction is the way expectations affect my thinking. Creeping in, almost unnoticed, expectations can set me up for anger, disappointment, and resentment, all of which can keep me mired in my self-centeredness and addictive behavior—self-induced tyranny.

Expectations of self

To fully appreciate the negative influence of expectations, I begin with what I expect of myself. Of course, I expect to perform perfectly and to do so at all times. What an absurd notion! Being perfect is, of course, humanly impossible; thus, expecting to always be right and to always have the correct answer is a setup for failure.

Such expectations cause self-criticism and self-deprecation, both of which can preoccupy me and undermine my recovery.

Expectations of others

Equally dangerous are expectations of others. It is a sure-fire killer of relationships. Beginning with anger, unmet expectations rapidly become resentments, which we learn from the original Twelve-Step teachings, are toxic and potentially lethal.

Unmet expectations can distract us from our recovery program and drive us back into addictive behavior.

Since I cannot control anyone except myself, placing expectations on others is totally unrealistic. Most often, the other party is unaware of the expectations I have placed on them. Hence I have set myself up for misunderstanding and strife in that relationship.

Expectations of circumstances

A third category is expectations of what will happen. Underlying such an expectation is the erroneous, usually unconscious, notion that I have some degree of control over future events or circumstances, or that I know what's going to happen. How foolish of me to expect that things will go exactly as I want them to or how I think they will go! Again, expectations are a setup for resentments.

The remedy

As I clearly learned through the Twelve Steps, I must surrender my expectations to my Higher Power, or they will haunt me and cripple my capacity to be free and content. As we stop placing expectations on ourselves, on others, and on circumstances, we realize we are free of the anxiety caused by unmet expectations. We become better able to see the needs of others and to respond in genuine love and concern. We are better able to get out of self-centeredness, and we open the door to the possibility of contentment and serenity.

One last thought

From a very practical point of view, gratitude seems to be the key to acceptance of self, others, and circumstances as they are—free of any unrealistic and oppressive expectations. I cannot be grateful and angry at the same time. I cannot be grateful and resentful at the same time. I cannot be grateful and fearful at the same time. In my experience, when I am actively, consciously, deliberately, and intentionally grateful, I open the gateway to true recovery and serenity. ☺

LIVING IN SOBRIETY

Living in Sobriety while moving

BY RACHEL

I was so grateful that there were so many people in my life that could help me out during what could have been a traumatic move.

When my husband was fortunate enough to buy a new home, I was tasked with the job of packing and moving. How was I going to pack my computer (room) up and move while I was doing so much service work for the fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous? With careful planning, I was able to make it happen. SAA taught me how to do a sobriety plan. When challenged with a task, a vacation or something unusual, I was to write down what my sobriety would look like that day. When would I fit my phone calls/text messages into my day? When would I go to a meeting? When would I talk with my sponsees and sponsor? All these questions and more can fit into a sobriety plan and help me plan my day.

I started packing a month ago. I packed twenty boxes of items that I don't use on a regular basis. I was surprised how much "stuff" I had accumulated in eight years. How was I going to continue living my life with so many boxes around? I started packing everything else three days before the move. First, I packed my living quarters, then I packed the kitchen, and finally, I packed the computer room. I didn't mind eating out for several days, nor did I mind living out of a suitcase for a week, but how could I live without my computer? I was to find out.

I called trusted servants/friends in the fellowship and asked them to take care of my responsibilities for a week. Each person stepped up and helped me by chairing the meeting, opening up the church/venue, and hosting a zoom meeting. They were very helpful and did a great job in my absence. It made me feel loved. I was so grateful that there were so many people in my life that could help me out

during what could have been a traumatic move.

On the day of the move, I did not go to my in-person meeting nor did I attend the meeting the night before. I was feeling kind of lost and isolated – somewhat out of touch. But I made my phone calls and texted by buddies in the program, and I made it through. The moving company I hired was supposed to send two men and a truck at ten o'clock in the morning. They did not show up until five o'clock in the evening. In the meantime, my husband and I moved as many boxes as we could. There were seventy boxes in total when I got finished packing. I prayed many times that day in hopes that the truck would show up. I even thought of getting a moving truck and hiring some men to help me move if the company I hired did not show up. It was a very stressful day, but I relied on contact with my Higher Power and my sponsor to get me through.

When the truck pulled into the driveway, I was surprised to see six men get out of the truck. They had just finished their third job for that day, and my move was number four. They were pumped up and ready to go. They appreciated the fact that I mainly had boxes and furniture. We had already moved the miscellaneous items. They made quick work of the boxes then

wrapped all my furniture in cloth and plastic wrap. They were all packed up in two hours. They were not able to get a break during the drive to the next home because we were less than a mile away from the new house.

Unpacking went quickly as well. I was called in many different directions at once. All the boxes were labeled so they just had to read where the boxes went, but the furniture was not labeled so I had to assist with each item. Sometimes they were wrapped so well that I did not know what it was until they unpacked it from its cloth and cellophane. The monster of the move was the elliptical machine. I wanted it upstairs. The head of the crew thought it should go in the front door and several of the other men thought it should go through the garage. But with prayer and patience and a little nail biting they made it up the stairs in one piece without scratching the walls.

I was very pleased with the movers and how they handled themselves. They even set up my bed before they left. My husband and I made the bed and

Sharing your story in The Outer Circle is like sharing to the largest meeting in the world. If you have five or more years of sobriety and would like to celebrate by writing a Living in Sobriety column, please contact toc@saa-recovery.org.

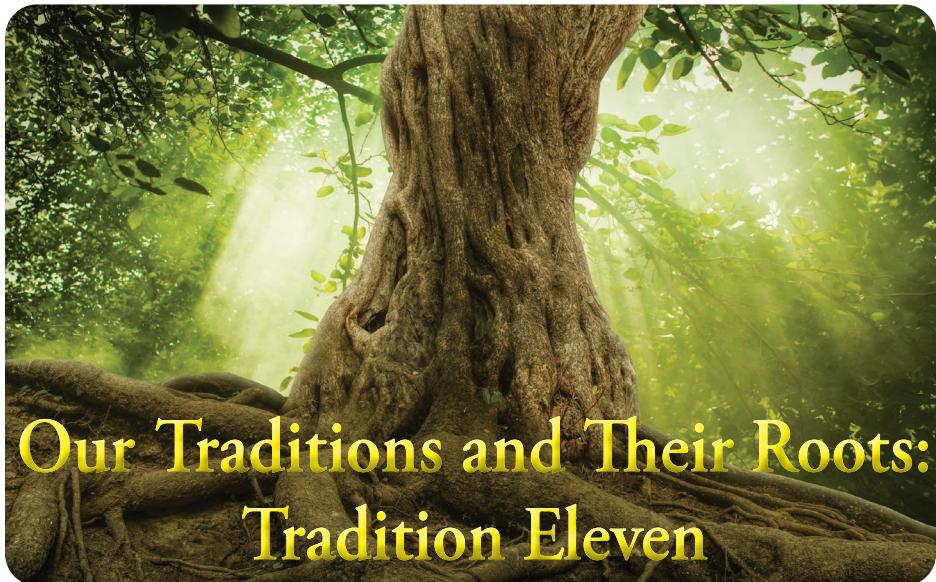
crashed but not before giving thanks for the beautiful new home and my sobriety. I did a quick Tenth Step and went to sleep. I could not have done this move without the help of Sex Addicts Anonymous in my life. I am very grateful to the program for helping me to be calm in stressful situations.

My friends in the fellowship wanted to see pictures of our new home, but that had to wait until I unpacked everything. However, first things first; I had to pray and meditate on the thought for the day in my *Voices of Recovery* book before I started on the mountain of boxes. Thanks to my Higher Power, my friends in the fellowship, and the way of life they taught me to live, I was able to get through this demanding process with my sobriety and serenity intact. I thank God for this program and the new life it has given me!

[Editor's note: If you are interested in another moving-in-recovery story that was not so much thoughtful due-diligence but rather damage control, see the entry for November 17 in Voices of Recovery.]

Contact the ISO:

- » Phone: [713-869-4902](tel:713-869-4902)
- » Email: info@saa-recovery.org
- » Board: board@saa-recovery.org
- » Literature Committee: litcom@saa-recovery.org
- » Conference Steering Committee (CSC): csc@saa-recovery.org
- » Submit literature at: <https://saa-recovery.org/submit>
- » Submit to *The Outer Circle* at: <https://saa-recovery.org/submit-to-toc>
- » Participate in ISO service: <https://saa-iso.org>
- » More on page 30



Our Traditions and Their Roots: Tradition Eleven

“Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.”

Editor’s Note: This is the twelfth in the series that looks to the Green Book’s exposition of each Tradition, along with the history of the problem each Tradition sought to address from AA source material. Authors have varied across the series.

BY ANONYMOUS

A beautiful reminder of the importance of humility, Tradition Eleven also brings to our attention that we do not live in a vacuum and that those living around us will notice a change in our demeanor and our behavior as we work the Steps and practice the principles of the program in our everyday lives. They may want to know what has brought about these changes. We also may want to be sure others struggling with similar issues are aware that help is available. Tradition Eleven gives us guidance in talking with others about the SAA program of recovery.

We live in a real world and in real time. We experience real challenges, real disappointments, real obstacles, and very difficult issues with relationships. But as we work the Twelve-Step recovery program, we come to realize that fewer and fewer of our problems are of our own making, and we learn to accept our circumstances and challenges with fortitude and gratitude. The spiritual awakening espoused by the Twelve-Step

program is transformative. We begin to behave differently. We begin to think differently. In recovery, we respond to challenges differently. And those around us will notice the difference.

On a daily basis, each of us interacts with others—our “public”—as we go about everyday life. Others notice our attitude and our behavior, meaning they will also notice that we are changing. Those close to us will perceive, perhaps unconsciously at first, a shift from self-centeredness to genuine concern for others and to a desire to be of service. That is attraction, a byproduct of newly emerging humility.

Likewise, our groups interact with outside persons and organizations. The facilities where we meet will be aware of our behavior and the way we conduct ourselves and the way we take care of our meeting room. Are we orderly and courteous in coming and going? Do we leave our meeting space neat and clean after every meeting? Rest assured, our landlord will notice.

On a broader scale, as we experience the rewards of recovery, we will inevitably want to tell others outside our fellowship about our new-found way of living. As a group, we want to let our community know that we exist and that we stand ready to help others struggling with addiction.

How do we communicate what our program offers without succumbing to the urge to advertise—to promote? This can be tricky business. We certainly do not want to hide under a bushel. Nor

do we want to fall into the modern-day tendency to engage in hyperbolic promotion. It is here that personal humility is mirrored in group or organizational humility.

Inevitably, as our existence becomes known in a community, opportunities will arise to tell other individuals or groups about the SAA program of recovery. This is one of the ways we carry the message as suggested in Step Twelve. We might inform professionals who are likely to encounter persons struggling with sex addiction about our program, the times and locations of our meetings, and our willingness to help if needed.

In a spirit of humility, we share our experience and suggest that others struggling with similar issues might find our program helpful. We make no promises of success; we simply share how the program has affected our lives.

When called on to speak publicly, we can explain the workings of the program and availability of our meetings, but such information is always couched in terms of our own personal experience. We request anonymity if our comments are going to be broadcast. Who we are is not important; what is important is our message—how we have benefitted from participating in the SAA fellowship and working the SAA program of recovery.

This tradition is truly a guide for humility in action!

Next issue: Tradition Twelve. ©

DEAR WILL

Rearranging our circles

BY WILL

My experience has been that our addiction really decides what behaviors are inner-circle and which ones might be middle-circle.

Dear Will

I have been attending SAA meetings and working the steps with my sponsor for a good six months, now. I can honestly say that working the program has saved my life. I cannot imagine how much further my acting-out behavior would have taken me had I not found recovery through SAA. I put seeking sexual massage in my inner circle, and, despite my efforts to date, the support from others in SAA, and working on this with my sponsor, I find that I am still unable to stop. I am powerless over this behavior. I am considering moving sexual massage to my middle circle so I can build up more sobriety and stop taking weekly white chips. What do you think?

Moving to the Middle

Dear Moving to the Middle

Thanks for reaching out. I, too, had an easier time surrendering some behaviors than others. I don't think our experience is unique in our fellowship.

For me, it was not a question of which circle I put a behavior in but rather in which circle that behavior belongs. I have heard over the years people in our fellowship describing inner-circle behaviors as the behaviors that brought us into recovery, the things that made us hit bottom, over which we are powerless to stop. Is that how you would describe seeking sexual massage for yourself?

I am curious as to what made you put that behavior in the inner circle to begin with. Was it your recognition of your powerlessness over the behavior? The actual or potential consequences of engaging in that behavior? That you could not stop the behavior on its own? Or some other reason?

I understand that our literature tells us that we place behaviors in the middle circle which are slippery for us or about which we are unsure. In your letter, you did not speak to confusion about this behavior. Instead, you stated that you could not stop this behavior on your own. Has anything changed regarding your relationship with seeking sexual massage that you feel it no longer can be described as an addictive sexual behavior for you?

My experience has been that our addiction really decides what behaviors are inner-circle and which ones might be middle-circle. Recovery through the Twelve Steps of SAA gives us tools to see that behavior for what it is and learn, with the support of others, how to break free from such addictive sexual behavior. So, do I think you should move seeking sexual massage from your inner circle to your middle circle? The way you describe your relationship with seeking sexual massage—you are powerless to stop it, it has you in its grip, and you are unable to resist when the urge hits—sounds like you have already identified it as an inner-circle behavior wherever you put it.

Will

If you have a question for Will, please e-mail
Men4SAA@saa-recovery.org

If you identify as a man or as male, and you need a sponsor or more recovery contacts, or if you would like to be a sponsor or contact for others, join the Men's Support List by e-mailing
Men4SAA@saa-recovery.org.

STORIES OF SERVICE

Service as an Opportunity to Express Gratitude

ISO CONFERENCE
NOMINATING
COMMITTEE

Long-term maintenance of a healthy twelve-step group requires much effort, ideally as a team.

As we begin a new service year, it seems appropriate to re-emphasize the importance of service as a fundamental element of the twelve-step program. As we progress from the self-centeredness of our addiction and become more attuned to the needs of others, we naturally feel the desire to move in the direction of service.

In Step Twelve, we are urged to carry the SAA message of recovery to other addicts and to practice program principles in every aspect of our lives. Hence, service in support of carrying the message in tune with program principles and traditions becomes a major focus of our daily program. We often experience a growing desire to give back to the fellowship in gratitude for what we have received. The desire to serve, in turn, grows into a heartfelt obligation to serve.

There are dozens of opportunities for service at the local level and within the ISO. Service does not have to be grand and noticeable. In fact, service worked anonymously and without fanfare proves to be the most sensitive, the most caring, and, as a result, the most gratifying. Simple actions can be as helpful to a group as any other more visible act of service we could do. These could be a phone call to a struggling sister or brother, or it could be showing up a few minutes early to a meeting to arrange chairs, make the coffee, put out literature, or welcome newcomers.

Long-term maintenance of a healthy twelve-step group requires much effort, ideally as a team. Healthy local groups are necessary components of a healthy fellowship, and a healthy fellowship

is attractive to newcomers and outsiders who are still struggling but beginning to realize that they need help.

Service opportunities within the ISO also abound. These include participating in ISO areas as a GSR (Group Service Representative), joining an ISO focus committee, or participating in the ISO Conference meeting even as a non-voting member. That kind of volunteer service can lead to election to the Conference Steering Committee, the Area Coordinating Committee, the Conference Nominating Committee, the ISO Board of Trustees, or the ISO Literature Committee.

Active service at any level supports the fellowship, and it also serves to buttress our own recovery.

For additional information about service within the ISO or to submit a service résumé, check out the International Service page on the ISO service website at saa-iso.org. This page does not require a username or password.

Stories of Service inspire others to be of service. Send your 250-300-word story to toc@saa-recovery.org.



Writing and sponsoring prisoners by correspondence continues to be the mainstay of the ISO prisoner outreach program. In addition, the Prisoner Outreach Committee has encouraged members of the fellowship to consider the possibility of starting SAA meetings in a nearby prison. As a result of the pandemic, a new possibility has emerged—namely, meeting by video-conference.

While face-to-face remains the preferred meeting modality in most situations, recent experience in Arizona suggests that meeting by video-conference can open new opportunities to carry the SAA message of recovery into prisons. If interested in learning more—whether you are in the free world or in prison—contact the ISO office by telephone (713-869-4902), email (info@saa-recovery.org), or postal mail (PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270).



FROM THE BOARD

Good news, bad news

BY BOB L.

BOARD MEMBER

*We value your
input. Email the
board at board@saa-recovery.org*

First, the good news. The 2022 Conference meeting, held on Zoom last month, was one of the most successful the fellowship has had. The business motions went smoothly, with little controversy or opposition. In the end, all the motions were approved by a significant margin, indicating consensus across the fellowship.

One point of “bad” news about the Conference is that attendance by areas was somewhat sparse. That isn’t really bad, but it is disappointing to experience the lack of participation of so many areas. Those that sent delegates participated in lively debates and voted their respective area’s conscience, but greater participation would mean increased representation by the broad fellowship. Attention must, and will, be paid to methods to increase area attendance at the Conference. At present, just how and by whom that effort will be spearheaded remains under discussion, so more news will be sent in the future.

A personal disappointment is that we had to cancel the in-person mode of the Conference. In discussions with many fellow addicts in various contexts, it seems uniformly agreed that a Conference conducted solely by Zoom, while efficient for business matters, leaves wanting the wonderful benefit of personal interaction among delegates. In addition, based on Conference attendance over the past two years, it appears there is no benefit of increased attendance in using Zoom for international delegates. In each of the past two Conferences, there were very few international delegates who attended on Zoom, while in the past an equal or greater number came to our in-person meetings. One reason for this phenomenon is the extreme

FROM THE BOARD

variance in time zones, which makes international attendance on Zoom very difficult and tiring. Even those who attend from Europe and environs usually have to leave the Conference early since it becomes too late to remain awake given the time of day/night in their countries.

Next year, circumstances permitting, we will have our first hybrid meeting of the Conference. It may well have implications for how delegates participate remotely while significant interaction takes place in conference rooms in Houston. This is very much a work in progress, and what the impact will be is unpredictable. Nevertheless, the experience certainly will be revealing.

Next, the bad news. The ISO has not received a bid from any source to host a convention for the year 2024. We are looking forward to an excellent convention in 2023. For the following year, it appears more and more likely that there will be no convention. As you may know, the attendance at the Atlanta convention was disappointing. Attendance was likely affected by COVID-19, though other causes may also have been factors. We can't use the Atlanta experience to predict future attendance, so the next year's experience will be telling.

If conventions do not draw sufficient participation to continue as free-standing events, it is possible the Board will decide to combine the conventions and the conferences in the future. While there isn't sufficient empirical evidence upon which to make such a decision, some people believe recombining these annual events will lead to greater attendance, interest, and participation.

We have two requests of you, our fellows: (1) if your group, intergroup, area, etc. has any desire to host a convention in 2024, please contact info@saa-recovery.org. The idea that there won't be any convention is anathema to us at the ISO, after so many years of uninterrupted events that most attendees have found to be a significant contribution to their sobriety. (2) If you have any feedback on the desirability of combining the Conference and the convention in the future, please send your thoughts to the email address above.

Thank you for reading through this column, and best wishes to your continuing journey of sobriety!

ISO NEWS

Host city still needed for 2024 convention!

The ISO is still in need of a host city for its 2024 convention. Local groups, intergroups, and areas need to step up and place a bid, otherwise there may not be a convention in 2024!

To learn more or to place a bid, email info@saa-recovery.org or call 713-869-4902.

List your SAA Event on the SAA Website

Is your group, intergroup, or area planning an SAA retreat, workshop, or other event? You can have it listed (and view other listings) on the SAA outreach site at <https://saa-recovery.org/news-events>. A link to the form to submit your event is just above the “Events” section. After submitting, please allow up to five days (excluding weekends) for your submission to be reviewed and approved.

Get involved in International Service!

Would you like to give back to our fellowship? International service is a great way to get more involved in the SAA fellowship, deepen your recovery, and help reach suffering sex addicts worldwide.

The Conference Nominating Committee (NomCom) presents a slate of nominees at the annual Conference meeting in October to fill open positions on the Board of Trustees, Literature Committee, Conference Steering Committee, Conference Area Coordinating Committee, and Conference Nominating Committee. If you are interested in serving on any of these committees and you meet the guidelines for international service, we encourage you to fill out a service résumé!

For more information about the positions and for a copy of the Guidelines for International Service, please visit the service website saa-iso.org and click on the International Service tab. Contact the ISO office via phone, (713) 869-4902, or email, info@saa-recovery.org, for the username and password to access these documents.

Have you filled out a service résumé in the past? We encourage you to fill out a new resume each year before June 30th.

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

ISO NEWS

Represent Your Intergroup or Group in the Intergroup Communications Committee (ICC) and Help Your Local Meetings

In the spirit of the First Tradition, the ICC “exists for the purpose of facilitating communication amongst intergroups, encouraging groups to carry the SAA message to the sex addict still suffering—our one primary purpose—sharing best practices, helping new intergroups to become established, and recommending changes to the SAA *Intergroup Guide* and SAA *Group Guide*.”

Learn how other intergroups and groups engage in outreach to still-suffering addicts, including special populations like prisoners, women, LGBT, and BIPOC addicts; learn how intergroups and groups conduct retreats and practice the Seventh Tradition; and share your experience, strength, and hope in service to others.

If you would like to take part in this collaborative effort and learn from others about how to improve your intergroup and group activities, email your request to info@saa-recovery.org.

Financial Summary

Our total SAA Green Book sales were below our estimate of \$8,300 by \$1,178 in September. Our HCI sales (August's numbers, a month behind) were \$1,569 lower than budgeted. Findaway audio sales were \$39 above our budget of \$300. For the year, we are 79.85% of our estimated sales.

Our book *Voices of Recovery* sales for September were \$113 lower than our budget of \$2,400 for September. The ISO sales were \$62 above budget, while the HCI sales were \$175 lower than budget. For the year, we are at an average of 92.53% of our estimated sales.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales were above our estimate of \$2,200 by \$1,193 in September. For the year, we are at 140.71% of our estimated sales.

Our plastic chips sales were below our estimate of \$1,200 by -\$219 in September. For the year, we are at 96.93% of our estimated sales.

Our bronze medallion sales were below our estimate of \$2,100 by \$479 in September. For the year, we are at 90.55% of our estimated sales.

Our total sales for September were below our estimate of \$16,355 by \$422 in September. For the year, we are at 91.21% of our estimated sales.

Individual donations were above our estimate of \$41,000 by \$16,770 in September. We are very grateful for the fellowship's response to our financial issues. For the year, we are at 105.04% of our estimated individual donations. The general donations were above our bud-

ISO NEWS

get by \$16,560, and the LifeLine Partners amount was \$203 below the budget of \$29,000. Our goal is \$50,000 per month.

Group donations were above our estimate of \$9,600 by \$14,315 in September. We are very grateful for the member group's response to our financial issues. For the year, we are at 157.94% of our estimated group donations. General group donations were \$14,797 above our budget of \$6,800, and group LifeLine Partners are \$481 below our budget of \$2,800.

Our total donations were \$31,085 above the budgeted amount of \$50,600. For the year, we are at 114.95% of our estimated donations.

Our product inventory is valued at \$59,984.

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

Our total expenses were \$133 lower than our budget of \$73,629.

Our net income was \$30,020 above our budget of -\$10,772.

For September of total income was \$99,669, and our cost of goods was \$6,925, resulting in a gross profit of \$92,744. Our total expenses were \$73,496 resulting in a net income of \$19,248, which was \$30,020 higher than budget. For the year, we are at 100.65% of our budgeted net income at the end of September.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,

Paul M.

Executive Director



CONTACT THE ISO

Office

ISO Office Mailing Address:
PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

Phone: 713-869-4902
Fax: 713-692-0105

Office e-mail: info@saa-recovery.org
The Outer Circle e-mail: toc@saa-recovery.org
Website: www.saa-recovery.org

The Outer Circle

Editor: Don S.

Office Staff

Executive Director: Paul M.: director@saa-iso.net
Associate Director: Tracy R.
Publications Manager: Cody S.
Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community, and 7th Tradition Manager: Phillip B.
Information Technician and Prison Outreach Manager: Jonathan C.
Information Technician: DJ B.
Finance Assistant: Judy K.
Administrative Assistant: Jerry B.
Administrative Assistant: Evan E.
Administrative Assistant: Harvey A.

The ISO of SAA Board of Trustees also has an e-mail box, which may be used to register comments, positive or negative, from the fellowship about the ISO staff: board@saa-recovery.org

Board of Trustees and Literature Committee

Board

Bill I; BJ M; Bob H; Bob L (Chair); Carl D;
Eddie N; Jim L; Karen S; Les J; Michelle W;
Wayne K

Board: board@saa-recovery.org

CSC: csc@saa-recovery.org

LitCom: litcom@saa-recovery.org

Literature Committee

Cara A; Chris D; David C; Don S (TOC Editor);
Deb W; Jackie J (Vice chair); Jim P; Juan K; Maud D (Secretary); Mike K; Rachel R (Chair); Ruth UK; Stephen P; Zach R.

Calendar

The most up-to-date committee schedule and information about joining any ISO Committee
can be found at www.saa-iso.org.

Prisoner Letter Writing Program

Writing and sponsoring prisoners by correspondence continues to be the mainstay of the ISO prisoner outreach program. In addition, the Prisoner Outreach Committee has encouraged members of the fellowship to consider the possibility of starting SAA meetings in a nearby prison. As a result of the pandemic, a new possibility has emerged—namely, meeting by video-conference.

While face-to-face remains the preferred meeting modality in most situations, recent experience in Arizona suggests that meeting by video-conference can open new opportunities to carry the SAA message of recovery into prisons. If interested in learning more—whether you are in the free world or in prison—contact the ISO office by telephone (713-869-4902), email (info@saa-recovery.org), or postal mail (PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270).

PI/CPC (Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community)

The Twelfth Step says that, “we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.” At the ISO level, this is done in part through the work of the Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) committee. If you would like to work the Twelfth Step at the ISO level, contact PhillipB@saa-iso.net or call the ISO at 713-869-4902.

LifeLine Partners

LifeLine donations provide steady income that allows the ISO to operate and help groups carry the SAA message. Become a LifeLine partner today by calling 713-869-4902 or by going to saa-recovery.org and clicking “Contribute.”

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Get Your Story Published in *The Outer Circle*

The Outer Circle newsletter relies on submissions from the SAA fellowship. It's a great way to carry the message to other sex addicts in the spirit of Step Twelve — and be of service! Articles may be submitted to toc@saa-recovery.org or to the ISO office. Please submit articles via email in Microsoft Word format with the RELEASE FORM at the bottom of this page.

Deadlines for Submission and Topics		
Jan/Feb:	“First Three Steps”	Nov 5
Mar/Apr:	“Taking Action”	Jan 5
May/June:	“Changes, Hope”	Mar 5
July/Aug:	“Celebration and Exploration”	May 5
Sept/Oct:	“Letting Go, Giving Back”	July 5
Nov/Dec:	“Prayer and Meditation”	Sept 5

Here are some general writing guidelines:

Living in Sobriety: For those with five-plus years of sobriety. 750-900 words on how you got sober and what you're doing to stay sober.

Stories of Service: 300-500 words on why you do service and how it helps your recovery.

Feature articles: 650-1,200 words on any of the topics listed above. It may be helpful to think of your submission as a written form of a share you'd give in a meeting — something that's working for you or that you're struggling with in recovery as it relates to the steps or traditions.

General Release Form

In consideration of being reviewed for possible publication, I hereby transfer and release to the ISO of SAA, Inc (assignee) all legal rights to the publication of my submission(s) or any edited version thereof in any official ISO publication, including Sex Addicts Anonymous, The Outer Circle, the SAA meditation book, the SAA websites, or any other SAA program material, such as pamphlets, booklets and audio recordings.

With this submission, I transfer to the assignee without limitation the legal title and all literary rights, including copyright and/or trademark and the full right and license to reproduce, copy, edit for content, modify, distribute, and create derivatives from the submitted work. I understand that every effort will be made to safeguard my personal anonymity in the publication and distribution of this material. I also understand that I may or may not receive further communication regarding my submission prior to its publication.

I hereby further attest that I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization, and I hereby Release the assignee from any claim whatsoever by me or my successors.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

SAA TWELVE STEPS

1. We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

