

The Outer Circle

The Newsletter of the
International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

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ISO Reorganization Proposal

(From the ISO-Structure Committee)

This is the third in a series of articles reporting, respectively, the purpose, the findings, and the recommendations of the ISO Structure Committee (ISO-S). In the previous issue (*The Outer Circle*, volume 6, issue 2, p.4), opportunities for improvement were identified. Although many activities of the ISO run reasonably well at the present time, the fellowship is growing and growing rapidly. The projected growth would stretch the capacity of the ISO to respond and may result in some ISO activities becoming totally dysfunctional.

In this issue, the ISO-S gives an overview of the changes recommended to meet the challenges in the fellowship that are anticipated during the next five to ten years. The recommendations fall into three distinct categories:

1. Clarify the missions of the major ISO components.
2. Reduce the size of the ISO Board of Trustees.
3. Re-align the member groups into Areas in place of regions.

The major components of the ISO are the Conference, the Board of Trustees, the Literature Committee, and the international office, the latter of which reports directly to the Board. Each has a unique role within the ISO, but the definitions in the current Bylaws are often unclear, leading to confusion about roles and responsibilities. For example, oversight of many ISO outreach activities has been assumed by the Board and office, because the Conference does not have an organizational structure that can respond to the expressed needs of groups and members. The ISO-S recommends that the roles of each component be clarified to streamline and improve the service work of the ISO.

As currently defined, the Board of Trustees, the component legally responsible for the operation of the ISO corporation, is too large. This results in meetings that are lengthy and difficult to manage. Review of other Twelve-Step fellowships and other non-profit organizations shows that for many reasons the optimal Board size is seven to fourteen members. The ISO-S recommends changes to reduce the ISO Board to ten to fourteen members.

Finally, to address the anticipated problems with the size of the Conference, the ISO-S recommends a shift from a region-based organizational structure to an Area-based structure. The current eight regions cover huge geographical distances, making meeting together at any time except the Conference virtually impossible. In addition, the current structure does not logically or adequately address the rapid growth in telemeetings and international groups.

The idea here is that dividing the member groups into smaller Areas would greatly facilitate meeting during the year to discuss issues of local concern and to consider motions that might be submitted to the international Conference. Most Areas would be defined by geography. A few Areas might also be defined by affinity, such as telemeetings, common language, or other cultural similarities.

This model envisions that an Area would hold at least one Area assembly meeting each year at a time different from the Conference. The Area assembly would be composed of General Service Representatives (GSRs) elected by the groups in that Area. The Area assembly would consider issues of concern to the local groups within that Area. Those concerns and other issues relating to the fellowship as a whole would be forwarded to the ISO Conference for consideration at that level. It is anticipated that business motions considered by the ISO Conference would come from Area assemblies or from elsewhere within the ISO, such as the Board, Literature Committee, or an ISO service committee.

The ISO Conference would be composed of delegates elected by Area assemblies plus trusted servants elected by the Conference to serve on the ISO Board and Literature Committee, as well as members of the full-time ISO office staff. The purpose, structure, and responsibilities of the Conference would be defined by the Conference Charter, which is presently being drafted by the Conference Charter Committee.

Under this new organizational scheme, the Conference would assume many of the outreach and oversight functions that are currently, by necessity, under Board authority. The Board would then focus its energies on its primary legal responsibilities as custodian of the ISO corporation responsible for operational policies and fiduciary management of the ISO. Because the Conference would be able to create and oversee committees that would operate year-round, the Conference would have a greater say in the direction of the Fellowship.

The ISO-S envisions that this new structure, working in sync with a new Conference Charter, would position the ISO to respond efficiently and effectively to the needs of member groups and to the many requests from addicts who still suffer.

The ISO-S proposal and the draft Conference Charter will be presented in detail at the 2012 Conference and Convention. On the ISO service website, you may read the full ISO-S report and responses to questions about the proposal. Send any comments or questions you may have to the ISO office.

Vision for the Future of the ISO Conference

(From the Conference Charter Committee)

The Conference Charter Committee (CCC) has completed a draft Charter for initial unveiling at the 2012 Conference and Convention. As previously noted, this foundational document will detail the purpose, organization, and basic responsibilities of the Delegate Conference. While the Conference has been viewed in the past primarily as an event – a meeting of delegates that occurs once a year – the Charter will establish the framework for continuing service throughout the year by the Conference.

The importance of the Conference Charter cannot be overemphasized. After its adoption by the delegates, the Conference Charter will join the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of SAA and the ISO Bylaws, as one of the foundational documents that guide the ISO. The Charter will open the door to a whole new role for the Conference to participate actively in the outreach programs of the ISO and to support local groups in achieving their primary purpose of carrying the SAA message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

The CCC anticipates that the Charter will also create a Conference that is a much better representation of the group conscience of the fellowship than the current Conference. As such, the Conference would then be able truly to serve as spiritual guardian of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of SAA on behalf of the fellowship at large.

It is envisioned that the Conference will establish its own leadership team separate from the Board and Literature Committee and that the Conference will develop committees to address issues arising from the Conference, the Areas, and local groups. More members of the fellowship will have the opportunity to begin participation in ISO activities at the Area level, making it an excellent training ground for higher levels of service within the ISO.

As noted in the previous article, the CCC is planning a workshop during the 2012 Convention to provide Conference delegates and other members of the fellowship the opportunity to examine the draft Charter, to ask questions, and to offer feedback. In addition, interested members will be able to sign up for email announcements about CCC meetings and activities during the next service year.

Any member of the fellowship is welcome to participate in the monthly CCC teleconferences, which are held on the third Sunday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Central Time. The call-in number and access code are available from the ISO office.

Call to Service!

Dear Fellowship Friends,

This is a 12th step *Call to Action* on the international stage.

The Fellowship has work to do in Outreach and needs members for the General Outreach committee and subcommittees of the International Service Organization of Sex Addicts Anonymous.

Energized workers are needed in the following areas:

- General Outreach
- Young Adults
- Public Information
- Women's Outreach
- GLBT Outreach
- Men's Outreach
- Compulsive Sexual Avoidance

*"Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps,
we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts
and to practice these principles in our lives."*

Our organization, Sex Addicts Anonymous, needs your experience, strength and hope to reach those who have not heard our message.

Can you help get the message out?

Let's pass our wisdom along. Leadership expressed through service on these committees is something you may not have considered. You are already showing up for meetings, sharing, sponsoring, fulfilling individual meeting needs, and attending conventions and conferences.

But the sex addict who hasn't heard the message needs your help.

Contact the ISO Office and ask how you can be of service.

Thank you for your service!

ISO Literature Committee Guidelines for submission of entries to be considered for the *SAA Meditation Book*

The ISO Literature Committee welcomes submission of entries from the fellowship-at-large for possible inclusion in the SAA Meditation Book. The Meditation Book will consist of 366 entries, one for each day of the calendar year.

To ensure consideration, submissions should follow these guidelines:

A short quotation should be taken from SAA publications that are Literature Committee approved or Conference approved (see list at the bottom of the page). The quote must be exact and followed by a citation that includes the name of the publication and page number, using the following style: *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 20. Submissions using quotes from other sources will not be considered.

The main body of the entry should be a thought-provoking expansion of the topic or principle expressed in the quotation, ideally including some fresh perspective on a particular aspect of SAA recovery. What we're looking for is your experience, your strength, your hope, and your voice. ***Please note that we have found that using "I" rather than "We" in the body of the meditation makes for a stronger meditation message.***

At the bottom of the page, a concise statement in the author's own words should summarize the main idea of the meditation or offer a poignant challenge or affirmation.

Each entry should be a maximum of 275 words including the quotation and the closing affirmation, so that each meditation will fit on a single page. Multiple entries may address slightly different aspects of the same subject.

Submissions must include your name and contact information and be accompanied by a signed release. By signing the release, the author grants the ISO of SAA, Inc. sole rights to edit, alter, publish, or reject any submission. A blank release form is available in this newsletter or may be obtained from the ISO office or downloaded and printed from the SAA website.

SAA Approved Literature

<i>Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Book)</i>	<i>Abstinence</i>
<i>Abstinence and Boundaries in SAA</i>	<i>The Bubble</i>
<i>First Step to Recovery</i>	<i>Writing to Prisoners</i>
<i>Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous</i>	<i>Group Guide</i>
<i>Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Pamphlet)</i>	<i>Intergroup Guide</i>
<i>Sexual Sobriety and the Internet</i>	<i>Three Circles</i>
<i>A Special Welcome to the Woman Newcomer</i>	<i>Tools of Recovery</i>
<i>Recovery from Compulsive Sexual Avoidance</i>	

Meditation Book Vision Statement

(approved by the Literature Committee)

“The SAA Meditation Book carries the message of recovery by collecting into one volume diverse voices of the SAA Fellowship to serve as a resource for meditation and prayer for the addict in recovery and the sex addict who still suffers.”

Send your meditation, contact information, and signed release form to the ISO.

(release form is located on the last page of this newsletter)

Please send a digital copy of your submission (attached as .doc, .docx, .rtf, .txt, or in the body of the email) to [**meditation@saa-recovery.org**](mailto:meditation@saa-recovery.org).

Include complete contact information and, if possible, a signed scanned release. All submitters must send a release form – one per author - before submissions can be considered.

You can also send your meditation, contact information, and signed release by postal mail to: ISO, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

If at all possible, please send your submission in digital form. We will, of course, consider all submissions. You will be sent a confirmation that your submission has been received.

Meditation Writing Tele-Workshops

All those interested in contributing to the Meditation Book are invited to attend one or more tele-workshops. We will go over the guidelines and process for submission; there will be ample time for writing, and time for sharing as well. Please consider joining us for this unique service opportunity!

All workshops are the 4th Sunday of each month at 5:00 p.m. Central Time and last until 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 24

Sunday, July 22

To register, call the ISO at 1-800-477-8191,
or send an e-mail to:

[**meditation@saa-recovery.org**](mailto:meditation@saa-recovery.org)

Personal Story Submissions for *Sex Addicts Anonymous*:

Do you have a personal story to tell?

The ISO Literature Committee continues to accept personal stories for consideration for future editions of the SAA book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

Guidelines for Submission of a Personal Story

Stories in the SAA book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, are an intensely personal way to help carry the SAA message to the addict who still suffers. While there are no absolute requirements for the content of a personal story, the Literature Committee recommends that a story describe:

- What it was like before entering SAA;
- What happened to bring you into SAA;
- What happened within SAA;
- What it is like now with the ongoing experience of SAA recovery.

It is recommended that a story emphasize the experience, strength, and hope found in SAA recovery. It is further recommended that the writer disclose his or her length of sobriety (or abstinence from addictive behaviors).

Personal stories are intended to help carry the message to the addict who still suffers. As much as possible, highly explicit descriptions of places, people, or acting out behaviors should be avoided. The best stories provide sobering details of unmanageability contrasted with the hope of recovery from sex addiction.

The preferred format for manuscripts is double-spaced with one-inch margins on all four sides in MS Word (or similar). Each submission must be accompanied by a signed release conveying ownership to the ISO of SAA, Inc. The release form is available on the last page of this newsletter or from the ISO office or SAA website (www.saa-recovery.org).

Submissions and a signed release form may be e-mailed as attachments to the ISO Literature Committee at info@saa-recovery.org.

They may also be sent in hard copy by postal mail to the ISO Literature Committee at ISO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

IMPORTANT

Please carefully read the following before submitting a personal story for *Sex Addicts Anonymous*:

Every story submitted for possible inclusion in the SAA book will be thoroughly reviewed and given in-depth consideration by the ISO Literature Committee, which is deeply grateful to every member who takes the time to write and submit a story.

The ISO of SAA, Inc. and the ISO Literature Committee do not guarantee that any particular story will appear in a future edition of the SAA book. Once submitted with a signed release form (located on the last page of this newsletter), the written story becomes the permanent property of the ISO of SAA, Inc., and may be edited or modified as deemed appropriate by the ISO Literature Committee.

Please also note that, while the ISO Literature Committee will acknowledge the initial receipt of a story, the ISO may or may not communicate further with the author about the suitability of the story or the likelihood of publication in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*.

Audio Version of SAA Green Book Now Available for the Visually Impaired

The National Library Service has recently produced an audio version of our SAA Green Book (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*). This audio book was produced by the government and is not available for sale by or use by the ISO of SAA, Inc. However, those who qualify for eligibility under the government guidelines may receive the SAA audio book from the National Library Service.

The website address for the National Library Service is:

www.loc.gov/nls/

***If you know of someone who could benefit from this service,
please let them know about this exciting development!***

7th Tradition Committee

LifeLine Partners...

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

So you have found some sobriety and you have worked the steps, what now? Of course, go to meetings regularly, stop isolating, and continue working the steps.

Anything else? Avoid self-absorbed behavior, and give back by working the 12th step in some way every day.

If your life (occupied with family, career, and other obligations) is to the point that you just don't have enough time for as much 12th step work as you would like, you can still MAKE A DIFFERENCE by becoming a *LifeLine Partner*.

A regular automatic *LifeLine Partner* contribution will assure that you really can MAKE A DIFFERENCE by providing the ISO of SAA with the funds needed to carry out its mission of aiding groups to carry the SAA message of recovery to still-suffering sex addicts.

Approximately 180 SAA members currently give through *LifeLine Partners*. With an estimated membership of over 13,000 people in SAA, this means that the number of those giving would only need to increase to 10% of our membership for us to easily reach our goal of increasing donations from \$7,000/month to \$20,000/month. Then we could not only continue all of our current ISO outreach activities, but funds would also be available for other ways to carry our message that we cannot currently afford.

Through *LifeLine Partners*, you really can MAKE A DIFFERENCE... and It's a good feeling!

If you are interested in signing up to be a *LifeLine Partner*, just call the ISO Office at 800-477-8191, and they will get you started.

Or, you can sign up online at: <https://saa-recovery.org/LifeLinePartner/>

We thank you for your support!
7th Tradition Committee

GLBT Committee

In the late summer of 2008, my eyes were opened to the possibility of a different way of being. Up to that moment, I had lived a life of despair, shame, anger, resentment, and constant defense as my ability to “manage” a double life kept me further and further from connecting to family, friends, lovers, god and myself.

But that season, I attended my first S-Meetings, and I found a place of belonging in SAA. For the first time in my life, I found a place where I could Be, if I dared be honest with myself, my fellow man, and with my Higher Power. I glommed onto the fellowship and recovery like the lifeline they are.

I found Service to be my most valuable gift. Every week as a trusted servant I would show up to lead the meeting. It forced me to read the Green Book. It forced me to honor my word. It plucked me from the darkness and carried me to the light.

In 2009, I attended my first international convention in Oakland – awe-inspiring! In 2010, I served on the Committee for the international convention in Albuquerque – recovery-building! In 2011, I attended the Houston convention and became the GLBT Committee Chair – challenging: In Service, I am not as good a leader as my fantasies would entertain. In Service, I’m not as bad a leader as my addiction would crave. In Service, I am removed from the hamster wheel of unmanageable ego thinking! In Service, I work my recovery in an environment where people can see me – warts and halos equally. In Service, I am just present – giving what I can offer, aiding where I can, growing as my Higher Power directs. In Service, I am saved.

In Service, we need people to show up, to offer what they can, and to let recovery work through them at an international-level. I know it is tough. I know it is hard. I know it is scary. I know my own character defects inspire the fear that challenges my actions. But, I know, that in Service, my recovery has deepened.

Because of Service, I am a better person. I ask that you join in Service at the International level: You are needed!

Allen H.
GLBT Subcommittee Chair

ISO Income/Expense Summary

As of March 31, 2012

	Mar 12	Monthly Avg	Jul '11-Mar 12
Income			
Sales	15,722.76	15,026.97	135,242.74
Shipping & Handling	1,611.25	1,339.69	12,057.24
Donations	18,509.25	24,560.87	221,047.79
Interest Earned	23.65	29.90	269.08
Other Income	804.12	94.74	852.67
Convention Revenue	7,373.00	1,331.56	11,984.00
Delegate Meeting Registration	650.00	98.33	885.00
Total Income	44,694.03	42,482.06	382,338.52
Cost of Goods Sold	8,426.48	7,222.93	65,006.39
Gross Profit	36,267.55	35,259.13	317,332.13
Expense			
Wages	18,339.17	18,492.94	166,436.50
Benefits	4,018.95	3,652.77	32,874.94
Payroll Taxes	1,583.75	1,520.75	13,686.78
Payroll Expenses	21.64	19.58	176.24
Insurance	323.86	320.91	2,888.20
Financial Charges	984.63	938.79	8,449.14
Communications	1,135.73	767.01	6,903.12
Occupancy Expenses	1,163.75	1,446.78	13,021.01
Office Expenses	835.26	809.88	7,288.90
Office Postage	8.25	32.59	293.27
The Outer Circle	2,136.68	1,341.07	12,069.60
Professional Fees	4,140.00	515.56	4,640.00
Depreciation	175.00	175.00	1,575.00
Bad Debts/Refunds	95.08	115.43	1,038.91
Translating/Literature Projects	0.00	111.11	1,000.00
Travel-Related Expenses	2,522.19	3,109.89	27,989.04
Board/Committee Expenses	738.46	1,261.57	11,354.14
Convention Expenses	0.00	138.90	1,250.11
Delegate Meeting Expenses	0.00	0.90	8.10
Total Expense	38,222.40	34,771.44	312,943.00
Net Income	-1,954.85	487.68	4,389.13

Financial Results for March 2012

In the month of March we showed a deficit of \$1,954.85. We had budgeted for a surplus of \$1,245.85. The deficit was due to a payment to the meditation book editor of \$4,140.00 that was not budgeted.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book exceeded our estimate by \$255.48 for March and has exceeded our estimate by \$806.45 for the current service year.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales exceeded our estimate by \$882.40 for March and have exceeded our estimate by \$827.14 for the current service year. Our bronze medallions exceeded our estimate by \$307.80 in March and have exceeded our estimate by \$2,905.05 for the current service year. Our Chips exceeded our estimate by \$17.47 in March and are below our estimate by \$737.36 for the current service year.

Our total sales for March were below our estimate by \$1,033.24.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$3,877.05 for March and have exceeded our estimate by \$311.61 for the current service year. Group donations were below our estimate by \$2,127.80 for March and are below our estimate by \$4,643.82 for the current service year.

Our product inventory is valued at \$36,169.69.

Our expenses exceeded our estimate by \$3,428.25 in March.

Summary of the current service year (July 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012):

- Sales are below our estimate by \$15,561.26
- Donations are below our estimate by \$4,332.21
- Expenses have exceeded our budget estimate by \$5,688.75
- Net surplus is below our budget estimate by \$22,066.62

Our operational reserve amount is \$131,921.00 and is fully funded. This is the estimated amount necessary to run the office for four months, and is reset each January. Our other reserve accounts, which are funded based on sales, were all fully funded.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,

Joe H.

Director of Operations

director@saa-iso.org

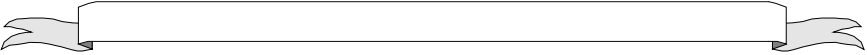
[Editor's Note: The ideas expressed in the literature section of The Outer Circle reflect the opinions of the authors of those articles, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the ISO or of the SAA fellowship as a whole.]

From the Editor


by Mike L.

Hello all. We have an especially good selection of articles this month, plus there is plenty of convention-related information for your reading enjoyment.

I don't know where the time goes, and here it is just about time for another convention. I'm probably hearing more about the convention from my groups than I normally do, especially with the convention still a couple of months away (I'm writing this on March 29). I can't help but think that all of this discussion signifies an enhanced awareness of these annual events and, in turn, an increased connection to the fellowship.



*I'm going to suggest the topic of
"friendship within SAA."*



I think back over how the fellowship has changed over the years, at least in my local area. I remember the days when we might have one or at the most two meetings a day. Fortunately most of the meetings were convenient to the area where I worked so I was able to stay in town in the evenings and go to a meeting. Especially in those early days when I was doing ninety-in-ninety, it was really beneficial to have these convenient meetings.

I still listen with awe, often at conventions, to the experiences of others who live in areas where there are no meetings, and who happily drive a couple of hundred miles to go to a meeting. I wonder if I would have been as willing. I've always enjoyed driving and traveling in general, so I'm inclined to think I would have happily made those trips. I'll never have the chance to know for certain, at least not unless all of the meetings in my area fold.

Also, by the time I got to SAA I was really tired of being miserable, and I think I would have done just about anything to get away from the life I was

living. And I didn't mind driving fifty miles in one direction to act out, sometimes night after night, driving the fifty miles back at seven a.m. Since I only had to drive a few miles at most to go to a meeting, even on the weekends when I was coming from home, I was spared having to face the irony of being confronted with my complaints that I had to drive too far to go to a meeting when I was willing to drive many times that to act out.

But there was something else about those face-to-face meetings that kept me coming back: the chance to connect with others on a personal level, something that I wouldn't have originally considered an attraction. I wouldn't say that I had never had such an opportunity before to connect with others, but in the years between 1978, when my addiction really started taking hold, and 1991, when I attended my first SAA meeting, I had spent more and more time alone, and less and less time in the company of others.

And yet it was relearning the skill of connecting with others that was such a huge gift to me in my recovery. I had forgotten over the years that I had more to offer others than what I could offer them sexually, and it was great to connect with the fact that there really was more to me than that.

In keeping with this theme, and also following up on the November/December topic of "The Home Group," I'm going to suggest the topic of "friendship within SAA." Do you have any special friends within the fellowship or experiences with friendship that have been especially beneficial to you within SAA? I'm not talking about a sponsor in particular, although it could be a sponsor. Anyway, as usual, this is just a general topic; feel free to run with it in any way that suits you.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the convention. I'm also looking forward to making some new friends there. Regardless of whether you are there or not, I'll be carrying all of the members of the fellowship in my heart. I look forward to talking with you next month.

Willingness Is a Choice

by David F.

I'm grateful for my willingness, grateful because it is key to my recovery. Without it I wouldn't be in recovery; I'd still be acting out sexually in one form or another. I'd be choosing to give in to the short-term gratification which led me to feelings of loneliness, despair, and helplessness, which eventually landed me in prison.

Yes, the disease of sexual addiction, at least for me, was an ongoing cycle where I needed more and more, advancing into areas where I never thought I'd go; yet I was still not satisfied. Getting arrested brought me to a halt. However, in the sad state I was in, I didn't even realize I had a problem. I didn't realize my actions and behaviors had a name, and I certainly didn't realize there was any help before I got locked up. The sad truth is that if I had realized I had a problem, I doubt I would've sought any help, just because of the fear, shame, and guilt.

I'm thankful because the prison where I am has a wonderful self-help library, and many self-help groups, especially Sex Addicts Anonymous, that deal with sexual addiction. Sadly, however, there are many prisons that don't have programs like this one. I believe many people remain in denial whether they are behind bars or not. Then, once the ones who are behind bars are released, if they haven't dealt with their issues and addictions, they most likely will return to society and continue to act out, victimize and return to prison.

Recovery is a great place to be. I love my SAA meetings. Although they are not easy at times, I love working the Twelve Steps, and the reward is wonderful. It's a lifelong journey, and I'm enjoying every breath I take. I believe I became willing when I slowly came out of denial. I realized as I looked back over the previous seven years of acting out that I had a problem, that I was addicted to pornography and internet sex, and that it was a very progressive illness. Nobody could have forced me to get help or convinced me that I needed it, or that there was a better way to live, that there truly was a healthier, more joyful life for me where I didn't need to feel alone, or hopeless and helpless. On the contrary, a better life, even in prison, is available through the Twelve Steps of SAA.

So, yes, my willingness came from my realization that I had the problem of sex addiction and that I no longer wanted to live that way, manipulating and victimizing others and myself. My belief in my Higher Power leads me to the path of willingness every day. Yes, every day. I don't take my willingness for granted. I believe the mere fact that I'm willing today to embark on this journey of recovery doesn't mean I'll still be willing tomorrow. Willingness is a decision to work my program daily, a decision I

need to make every day. As I said, nobody else can make that decision for me; it comes from within and from my Higher Power.

Willingness is a hot topic for me. In my past there were people I felt bad for; I wanted them to seek help for their issues and addictions, but they wouldn't listen. I could talk to them until I was blue in the face and it didn't matter. Now years later I understand willingness is a personal choice.

I praise God I recently was granted a parole. I should be released in March of 2012. I'm thankful for that and thankful that I have a place to go to continue my recovery through SAA. I know I will be bombarded and tested once released; never in my life will I need willingness more: willingness to go to a meeting, to call my sponsor or other meeting member, to read a piece of recovery literature, to work my Twelve Steps. I'm grateful to know it's my decision to choose willingness one day at a time.

Why I Contribute to LifeLine Partners

by Tim T.

Early in my recovery, I saw the donation card for LifeLine Partners. At the time, I was already very grateful for finding a way out of my miserable addictive behavior, and for the help my brothers and sisters were unselfishly giving me.

I was too new to be an example of recovery to others, but was happy to know I could give back through donations to the organization responsible for the materials I was reading. It was an easy decision and I hardly miss the money I give.

It feels good giving money to the ISO of SAA rather than hiding the money I selfishly spent on my addiction.

Now, further along in recovery, my tangible gifts as well as service all give back far more than I could have ever known.

To become a LifeLine Partner, call the ISO Office at 800-477-8191, or you may sign up online, here: <https://saa-recovery.org/LifeLinePartner/>.

Dear Will

Submitted by SAA Men's Outreach Subcommittee

Dear Will:

I have been attending SAA meetings for about six months. I am gay and attend some men's-only meetings in my area. Some of the men wear very revealing clothing to the meetings, and I struggle with staying present for the meeting in the presence of these men. On the one hand, I don't want to make an issue of this matter since I don't see any of the other men having difficulties with it. On the other hand, I want the meeting to be safe for me. What should I do?

—New and Still Struggling

Dear NASS:

I think it is safe to assume that the men at your meeting are not aware that they are dressing in a way that is causing you difficulties. There are at least a couple of different things you can do.

First of all, you could handle it at the group level. This could mean asking for a group conscience requesting to add some language to the meeting format about such awareness, or asking the group leader to make an announcement during the meeting along the lines of "please be aware that the way you dress may be causing difficulties for others." This method has the advantage of not putting the other man on the spot.

Or you could handle it on a more personal level. Will has found over the years that one of the quickest ways to move beyond regarding another person as a sexual object is to get to know that person. This could simply mean talking to him after a meeting about some matter of interest to the both of you, while you defer discussion about his mode of dress until later. It may help you in this regard to remember the words of the St. Francis Prayer: "Lord, grant that I may seek rather . . . to understand than to be understood . . ." If you choose to go this route, have your sponsor or a program buddy with you during these chats if you have any concern that it might not be a safe situation for you. Over time, you may very well find that the aspects of this man that are allowing him to rent space in your head will melt away. If not, then you always have the option to bring up the topic with him at an opportune time.

Will suggests considering this situation prayerfully and talking to your sponsor before taking any actions. The right answer may well come to you during your prayers or your talk with your sponsor, or both.

—Will

Tradition Six

by Adam M.

“An SAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”

For the most part, SAA and its meetings do not exist completely separate from the rest of the community. Few if any of our groups have independent areas of our own where we can meet. Therefore, it is necessary to make connections with other organizations, churches and hospitals, for example, who are willing to offer us meeting rooms.

I remember a couple of demonstrations of Tradition Six in my home town with regard to the facilities where we met. One time, a man called a group conscience to have the phone number of the church removed from the printed meeting schedule. While I looked at the whole exercise as somewhat paranoid at the time, later a possible reason became apparent to me as to why the group conscience was held and why the group agreed to remove the phone number. Certainly, somebody calling the church for information about the meetings would most likely be able to get the information from the church. However, at the same time that person could easily get the impression that the church was in some way sponsoring the meeting, and that SAA was thus affiliated with that particular church or perhaps the denomination the church represented. Now, many of our meetings have contact numbers of members who actually attend those meetings rather than the office of the hosting organization, which carries the extra advantage that the individuals are more likely to know details about the meeting. We are also thus honoring the perhaps unspoken boundaries of the hosting organization.

To take this idea a little further: Many of the meetings in my home town were at one time named after the location where they met. Thus we had the “First United Church SAA Meeting” or the “Community Hospital SAA Meeting.” These sorts of names were so common at one time that I never thought to question them. Then a movement began among the meetings in my town to start renaming these meetings in ways that did not refer to the organization hosting the meeting. Thus the “First United Church SAA Meeting” became the “Wednesday Night Men’s SAA Meeting” and the “Community Hospital SAA Meeting” became the “Back to Basics SAA Meeting.” By the time this trend started, I was more aware of why these types of names were far preferable to the previous names. Otherwise, it would be easy for a newcomer to think that SAA was affiliated with the First United Church.

It says on page 87 of the SAA Green Book, in the section on Tradition Six, "In this way we are able to cooperate with those outside of SAA who can help us, without being entangled in many of the problems that groups experience when working together." While the illustrations given in this brief article fall far short of entanglement, they nevertheless are good examples of how we can "cooperate with those outside of SAA who can help us." At the same time, we are respecting the boundaries of the hosting organization as well as our own boundaries.

Step Six

by Louis S.

I've just had another one of those days, another day where I have found myself reacting to people and the things they do. This time it had to do with some work I needed done at the house. A couple of days ago, I did what I thought was the right thing: I made some phone calls, each time speaking to a live person, and got agreements that each person would go by the house and would call me later with an estimate for the work. That was two days ago, and I just realized a little while ago that nobody I called has called me back. So I went to the place I normally went to in those sorts of situations, which is to take it personally, and start feeling sorry for myself. The end result of my actions was once again to feel paralyzed. I have been acting this way so long that it has never occurred to me to handle the situation in any other way.

Thanks to the SAA program and to turning my will and my life over to a Higher Power, there are many areas where my life has turned around 180 degrees. For a long time I didn't have any awareness of my particular character defect of reacting to others, and there was nothing in my Fifth Step that brought it out. I have had little hints along the way that there was an issue there, such as the time that somebody said to me, "Louis, you always feel as though you have to handle every situation on your own." And that was the case here. I felt abandoned by the service personnel who never called me back, and once again I felt alone and paralyzed.

The SAA Green Book says on page 40, "Just becoming aware of [our ingrained beliefs, attitudes, and habits of behavior] can be painful; imagining life without them may seem almost impossible." For me, becoming aware of this particular behavior was not painful in the normal sense of the word, although it did come as something of a shock. Even now I am not able even to begin thinking of imagining my life without this crutch of mine.

Still, I may be stating the obvious by saying that I can't start asking God to

help me remove these shortcomings until I become aware of them. In my case, that involves a certain level of willingness that I don't always have. I have to be open to becoming aware of these character defects before I can actually become aware of them. For some reason, today I was more willing than normal to do something besides feel sorry for myself about a situation over which I essentially had no control.

So, just for today, I did what amounted to the next right thing. I got on the internet and found some more service people, some of whom are actually closer to my house than the ones I originally called. I made some phone calls, spoke to some live people, and left some messages. So I feel better now because I know I took an action. I also know I can follow up on the ones I originally called tomorrow when I'll have the phone book with me from which I originally got their names.

The Sixth Step says "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." When I got so upset today at the behavior of these other people, I took a different tack than normal. I turned the situation over to God, and God gave me a simple and effective response. If this defect of character is like some of my others, once I get beneath this particular behavior, I'll find similar behaviors that possibly stem from the same original source. So I'll have the opportunity to work on a whole new family of character defects.

Compulsive Sexual Avoidance

New Pamphlet Available!

The ISO is pleased to announce approval

of a new piece of SAA literature:

"Recovery from Compulsive Sexual Avoidance A Return to Intimacy"

is now available online at the ISO website:

www.saa-store.org

Thank you to all who put so much hard work into producing
this new addition to SAA literature!

Dear Grace

Submitted by SAA Women's Outreach Subcommittee

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 receives. *Names have been changed to protect anonymity**

Dear Grace,

What do I do if another woman triggers me at a meeting? Can I ask her to stop coming to the meeting?

Triggered

Dear Triggered,

Sex addicts often find that their emotions are heightened when they stop acting out. It isn't surprising that we may have strong feelings about another member because of what they are wearing, the explicit details of someone's share, or personality conflicts. It may be helpful to ask for direction from a sponsor or trusted member.

Some face-to-face meeting formats have a section requesting that members raise their hands if they find a speaker's share triggering due to explicit details of acting out or language. The speaker would then modify their share by talking in more general terms. It's perfectly acceptable to raise your hand if you need to. Other members choose to quietly leave the room for their own safety, rejoining the meeting when they are comfortable. If we react strongly to a share, it may be that we have work to do around a similar issue. A sponsor or trusted recovery friend can guide us in finding appropriate steps to take.

It's important to remember that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Issues of meeting etiquette, meeting boundaries, etc. can be tricky issues for individuals in groups to come to terms with. There are bound to be disagreements. The health and safety of the meeting is what is important, while being inclusive to all members. This is why we rely on our Higher Power and the process of group conscience to come to group decisions. Our groups are founded on a stronger foundation than the will of individuals.

The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior. No one member has authority over another, so it isn't appropriate to ask one member to stop attending a meeting. You may choose to attend other face-to-face or phone meetings. The Third Tradition

opens the door to all sex addicts seeking help, so that we will be welcomed in our meetings and encouraged to keep coming back. This may challenge us to open our hearts and our meeting to those different from us and to seek ways to show the compassion and hope that have been given to us.

Good luck on your recovery journey!
Grace

Disclaimer: we cannot guarantee that this advice will be equally applicable to every woman, although it is our hope that such will be the case.
– SAA Women’s Outreach Subcommittee

Why am I a LifeLine Partner?

by Melissa W.

Ultimately, because I am forgetful, selfish and a sex addict.

I forget. A lot. In fact, my mental condition, that of an addict of the hopeless variety, helps me forget. That I am basically selfish. That I am in fact a sex addict. And that the best way to stay alive with these conditions is to be of service to my Higher Power and to others. It is not because I am a selfless, self-sacrificing, caring person. It is because I know that selfishness takes me into my addictions, which in turn will lead me to lose what is most valuable to me, including my life.

I also forget to be grateful. Giving a regular donation monthly for the purpose of reaching out to other sex addicts reminds me to be grateful for my sobriety and recovery.

I also forget how I got sober and how I have recovered – for me, it was through high quality SAA telemeetings and working the steps with sponsors through those telemeetings. I would not have found those meetings without the International Service Organization, the website, and a multitude of other services that ISO provides to the fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous.

Finally, I forget to donate, to be self-supporting. More often than not I show up at my face to face meeting without cash. I occasionally remember, but it is inconsistent at best.

I continue to work on these character defects, with God’s help. In the meantime, LifeLine Partners helps me stay on the road of happy destiny, a little bit happier and freer one day at a time. It works for me.

To become a LifeLine Partner, call the ISO Office at 800-477-8191, or you may sign up online, here: <https://saa-recovery.org/LifeLinePartner/>.

Finally Home

by Darrick A.

A few weeks ago, I received my third copy of *The Outer Circle*. I am incarcerated; the newsletter and responses from the ISO in Houston have formed my only contact with SAA.

I am writing for a couple of reasons. One is to express my gratitude to the fellowship for the Twelfth Step work that has allowed me to have a copy of *The Outer Circle*, a copy of the SAA Green Book, and other SAA literature. Also, I would like to share how it feels finally to feel home.

I have never been to a meeting of Sex Addicts Anonymous on the outside. So I don't know if the basket is passed twice, or if a can is set off to the side for members to donate to a "corrections committee," or if a fundraiser is held to enable the fellowship to reach out to us, but, regardless of how it is made possible, I want to tell everyone who helps, "Thank you." Thanks to you, I feel like I have finally received the answer, the piece of the puzzle that has been missing for over twenty years. My name is Darrick and I am a sex addict. Could it be as simple as that?

In the SAA Green Book on page 6, there should be a picture of me next to the sentence that states, "Our behavior didn't make sense, even to ourselves, until we understood that we were sex addicts." You see, over the years I have been to countless Twelve Step meetings and several treatment centers. I readily admitted to being an addict/alcoholic, worked the Steps, tried to live by spiritual principles, and helped others. I have visited mental health professionals hoping they could tell me what was "wrong" with me. I have picked up untold numbers of desire chips, telling myself at the time that I was not going to relapse again. And I meant it; so I would pour myself into the program, into religion, and into self-help literature, only to relapse a short while later, surprising myself and others since I had been "doing so well."

Over the last twenty years not only have I been in and out of different fellowships, but I have also been in and out of jail, and never as a direct result of my sexual conduct. My other addictions have created some horrible consequences. It seems my entire adult life has involved a losing struggle with myself. I always thought and have even been told by well-meaning people in these other fellowships that my sexual conduct was Fifth-, Sixth-, and Seventh-Step issues, that I should focus on sobriety and work the Steps. When I brought up my sexual conduct with my sponsors, I was basically told that if I stayed clean and sober and worked the Steps, those other problems would disappear, their definition of sobriety being abstinence from drugs or alcohol.

It was only after I received pamphlets and other material from ISO that I realized that I was a sex addict and that I had been acting out sexually long before I took the first drink or drug. Using drugs came later and they primarily served to temporarily remove my guilt and deaden my conscience about my sexual behavior. From then on, whenever I acted out sexually, I used drugs and alcohol, and whenever I used drugs and alcohol, I acted out sexually. The Three Circles concept helped me to see that my behavior is unique, and therefore abstinence to me may be entirely different from what it is to someone else, especially a non-sex addict.

Then it dawned on me that all of these many attempts at sobriety in those other fellowships were doomed to failure unless I also abstained from pornography and compulsive masturbation. I thought my preoccupation with pornography and sneaking around to arcades was the least of my problems, when it turns out that these behaviors were the source of my problems. I understood how a decision to watch a pornographic DVD could lead to my arrest for shoplifting so that I could buy drugs. These behaviors were relapse, and not merely relapse triggers. They were like the first drink that sets off the phenomenon of craving.

When I got arrested fourteen months ago for drugs and theft, and sentenced as a repeat offender, I felt so hopeless. I felt I had tried everything and for the first time I did not want to live. Less than a year before, I had graduated a two-year program (therapeutic community) with flying colors, only to find myself back on drugs in less than six months.

I came across a discarded pamphlet from SAA. I don't even remember the title, but it raised the question, Could I be a sex addict? I saved the address and wrote to SAA a few months later. So many things are clearer now. I no longer want to die; I want to live. My hope has been restored. I don't have to keep hiding in my confusion. Today, I am almost relieved to say that I am a sex addict. I know I still have a long way to go but at least I will no longer be using a bucket with a hole in the bottom. You have not heard the last from me, but for now, thank you so much.

Willingness: Gateway to Recovery

by Jim L.

Willingness is an essential factor for the addict seeking recovery. It precedes the actions suggested by the Twelve Steps, and it certainly must be in place well in advance of the spiritual awakening that results from working the Steps.

Willingness is a state of mind that closely resembles motivation but is not exactly the same. I may be motivated to take a certain action, but I may be unwilling to do so because of fear, cost, or other factors. Willingness is the energizing force that moves me from idea, concept, or intention to action. It fuels the admissions, the beliefs, the decisions, and the actions that I take in quest of recovery.

The word “willing” appears only once in the Twelve Steps (in Step Eight). The word “will” appears only twice – once in Step Three (my “will”) and once in Step Eleven (God’s will). Willingness, however, is implied as an underlying necessity in every Step:

- In Step One, I must be willing to admit my powerlessness. Any slight reservation about my lack of power over my addiction speaks to a lack of willingness and forebodes failure at recovery from the start.
- In Step Two, I must be willing to believe that a power greater than I does have power sufficient to deal with my addiction. I have already proved by my past behavior and have admitted in Step One that I cannot stop by my own power. Surely I am not hopeless!
- In Step Three, I must be willing to make a decision to let go of my will and to trust God. I don’t have to research the depths of theology nor come to a complete understanding of God to take this Step. I simply have to be willing to trust that God can transform me.
- In Step Four, I must be willing to start taking the necessary actions to move toward recovery. Here, I must be willing to search myself and my past actions fearlessly and to record my moral failures. It ain’t easy! But it is essential to prepare a platform for recovery.
- In Step Five, I must be willing to admit to myself, confess to God, and tell another person about the exact nature of my wrongs. This ain’t easy either! But it can be remarkably freeing, and it sets the stage for surrender.
- In Step Six, I must be willing to let go of my character defects, old friends though they may be.
- In Step Seven, I must be willing to ask God to remove my shortcomings.

This is the culmination of the process of surrender that began in Step Three. I can't remove my shortcomings by behavior modification. If I could have, I would have! Here I must be willing to let go and trust God to do the rest.

- In Step Eight, I must be willing to make a complete list of persons I have harmed, and I must be willing to make amends to every single one of them. Although pretty far along in the process, this Step directly tests the resolve of my willingness to make things right, insofar as I am able.
- In Step Nine, I must be willing to make direct amends to everyone on my list with only one caveat – that I should not do so, if it would injure that person or someone else. My goal is to set things straight but not to do further harm. My sponsor helps me make that judgment call.
- In Step Ten, I must be willing to assess my behavior on a daily basis and to admit my errors promptly and completely. Here, my willingness energizes my need to exercise discipline in my recovery program every day.
- In Step Eleven, I must be willing to work toward a closer connection with God, and I do this through prayer and meditation—another case where my willingness fuels personal discipline.
- In Step Twelve, I must be willing to work with other addicts and to practice the principles of the program diligently in my daily affairs. By doing so, I am assured that my own sobriety will be strengthened.

I often envision the Twelve Step program as having two sides—an input side and an output side. I see willingness as the gateway to the input side. It fuels my actions. It is the driver behind what I must do to experience recovery.

The second is the output side. It is transformation. It is God doing for me what I could not do for myself. I can be willing. I can take action. But only God can give me the spiritual awakening that results from my being willing to work the Steps and to trust God for the outcome. And it is in that spiritual awakening that true recovery lies.

The Beginnings of a Spiritual Awakening from a Fifth Step in Prison

by Andy B.

My sex addiction was rampant when I finally got caught (allowed myself to get caught) in Level Three behaviors; I was arrested and jailed in July of 1992. I was actually grateful to be extracted from outer society so I wouldn't be able to harm any more people by my acting out.

My suffering ("sick and tired of being sick and tired") and the suffering of others compelled me to begin the process of surrendering to God right away upon entering county jail. I jumped immediately into the evangelical religious process, which was appropriate for me at that time. I also joined the AA meetings here, because, as is often the case, they were the only game in town. I actively participated in our heartfelt, intimate little meetings hosted by a big-hearted woman AA volunteer. I eventually got my feet wet in working the first five Steps under the wise guidance of another generous volunteer, but his schedule did not allow us to complete our process. I didn't get to settle into a Twelve-Step-based recovery program until I reached my second unit of assignment in my state prison system.

It was my good fortune to be at that unit when I was, back in 1994, for they had a full-scale four-phrase Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP) going full blast, under the auspices of a governor who was also an AA member. As a supplement to their state-sponsored program, they offered AA and NA meetings two to three times a week.

An AA volunteer from a nearby city and one of our SATP counselors who was also an AA member set up a new Step Study group in June of 1994. I promptly signed up for it, and we progressed methodically through the Steps, studying the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and the AA Big Book thoroughly to glean the wisdom of those who went before us on the principles and actions associated with each Step.

Upon reaching Step Four, I felt it necessary, in the spirit of getting all of my skeletons/secrets out of the closet, to write down all the times I violated my and others' moral and physical boundaries in my sexual and other acting-out behaviors. I wrote these in a personal code so nobody else could understand what I had written. Only after I had recorded all my major moral violations did I feel complete, having done a "fearless and thorough" moral inventory, with no more skeletons left in my closet.

I also listed my fears, and charted out all my resentments, as described in the AA Big Book. I listed all my sexual and romantic relationships and liaisons, what my part was in their failure, and what harms I had caused.

When our class members had finished their Fourth Steps, our AA volunteer Robert brought a couple of AA friends down with him on the next two Saturdays. Thus, those of us who wanted to do our Fifth Steps with a qualified volunteer could do so.

On that first Saturday, Robert brought his friend Jim and one other member with him. One of our SATP inmate clerks, Chuck, came down to my cell at about eight a.m. and asked me if I was ready to do my Fifth Step with one of Robert's friends. Since I was anxious to shed the burdens I had enumerated in my Fourth Step, I said "Heck, yeah!" So the guard let me out of my cell, and I followed Chuck down to the education wing where Jim was waiting for me. Jim and I went into an empty, cold classroom where we spent the next three and a half hours plodding through my Fifth Step.

As you might imagine, especially since I was doing my Fifth Step with a "complete stranger" (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 61), I was quite nervous and fearful. Nonetheless, my determination finally to unload all my baggage was greater than my fears, so I put my faith in God and the program that my needs would be met through this session with Jim. They certainly were!

Jim put me at ease by observing the tradition of starting off by telling me some of his story, complete with the worst stuff he had done to other people and to himself. Then he reassured me that he would have no judgment about any of my actions, and that he would not share my confidences with anyone else. He explained that we would simply have me put everything out on the table for our moral inspection, and then determine what my character defects were that were behind all my selfish, harmful acts and attitudes.

My plan was to verbally confess every one of my voluminous sexual and other moral violations, but Jim gently cut me short after discerning a pattern of behaviors and various categories of acting-out behaviors and attitudes. He said, "Okay, Andy. I believe you've covered enough of that type of behaviors; what other kinds of behavior did you do?"

As I confessed some of my worst behaviors, many of which were Level Threes, my shame convinced me that at some point Jim would react in one or more negative ways: (1) he'd sneer in disgust and walk out, with some choice descriptive expletives leveled at me before he departed; (2) he'd pick up something large and start smashing me with it; or (3) he'd at least shake his head, frown, look at the floor, and declare something like, "You sure are a blankety-blank pervert!"

But, amazingly, Jim did none of those things. He merely kept nodding and smiling in an empathetic, compassionate, understanding way. He stayed true to his claim that he would not judge me for anything I had done.

He also helped me examine my list of fears, and see what, if anything, was real or substantial about them, and how they could be overcome as I learned to discern the truth about life, God, people, and myself. Jim also made sure I understood my part in all my resentments and relationships.

As I finished my verbal presentation to him of my moral inventory, I paused and looked to him for feedback. He took a few minutes to let it all soak in, and then gave me a reassuring smile as he proclaimed his punch line: "Well, Andy, it sounds to me like you're a regular ol' sufferin', strugglin' human being." Wow! "Huh?" I thought at first. "You must not have heard me right. I know you recognize me, as I do, as a hopeless, pitiful, disgusting pervert who oughta die and rot in hell!" But he stopped after he delivered his merciful "sentence," and so I could let it soak it in for a while. (Tears of gratitude flow as I type this! God is most gracious!)

In the last segment of our get-together, we went back through my Fourth Step, divided my wrongs into discernible categories, and then identified the character defects that were fueling my addiction, my misery, and my self-hatred.

Jim and I hugged, chuckled, and smiled warmly at each other before we parted on that glorious morning. I thanked him profusely, and he just replied, "Well, Andy, glad I could be of help. To keep what I have, I gotta give it away. So I just passed on to you the blessings of the program just as my sponsor did with me, and like his sponsor did with him. Maybe you'll get to do the same sometime soon." I agreed that that was a good goal to strive for. And I did just that within a few months...

That was the last time I ever saw Jim. Kind of like an angel on a special, quick mission in my life. And so I continue to strive to emulate Jim's example, and the example of so many unconditionally loving helpers in my life, both in prison and out. And I often share that wonderful revelation he delivered to me as he did other seekers in the program and elsewhere: "Well, it sounds to me like you're a regular ol' sufferin', strugglin' human being." And I thank God that, as I stay on His path that He has put before me, with lots of help from others on the same path, I'm sufferin' and strugglin' much less than in those old days. And less and less as I "let go and let God" have his way more and more in my life. God's way works best!

Willingness and Step Five

by Jeremy G.

What is the first thought or emotion that comes to my mind when I hear the word “willingness”? Willingness to go to group? To stop acting out? To help others? To help myself? To turn my will over to a higher power? Not to use drugs or have casual sex when approached?

Willingness to do what is right requires work. In this addiction it is so easy just to give in and act out, but I must not give in. As an addict, I have to fight my negative thoughts, desires, emotions and negative talk or peer groups.

No matter what I think when I hear this word, I must always look within. I must look within and change what it is that is negative so I can be free.

Step Five allows me to do this by getting help and advice from my Higher Power, my friends, my group, and my sponsor. However, I must be willing to take this great Step.

By the time I reached Step Five, I had already come a long way. However, before I even tried to get past or into Step Five, I had to do Step Four. I couldn't leave anything out.

In the SAA Green Book it says, “As long as they remain secret, [these painful thoughts and feelings] have the power to lead us back to our addiction” (p. 36). So if I leave out anything, then I am not ready for Step Five.

Step Five was not an easy Step. It took a lot of courage to do this Step. I knew that if I was truthful and told the whole story, it could be very emotional and painful. I had to take my time when doing this Step. In fact, I knew it might take me more than one session to finish it, but I had to finish it.

I felt better after I finished my Fifth Step. However, I was aware that I was also left at higher risk. I knew I could get blindsided with either a relapse or a negative emotional state. Therefore, I had to stay close to my support group and my sponsor.

In closing, I cannot stress how important a true and fearless Step Four and Five are. This is not only true for the negative aspects of my character, but the positive traits as well. I had to remember to take it “one day at a time” and I had to remember “easy does it.” I didn't get impatient, knowing that healing takes time, lots of work, and the willingness to change.

Tradition Five

by Charles B.

“Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers.”

While it is true that each group has but one primary purpose, it is also true that there are various ways that each group can fulfill its primary purpose. On page 85 of the SAA Green Book, we see several of those ways listed in just one sentence: “We strive for an atmosphere of recovery in our groups, by using consistent formats and meeting etiquette, starting and ending on time, and being respectful in our sharing and listening.” Here are three very distinctive ways that a group can carry its message, and in each case it is at least in part about safety.

The first method is to use consistent formats and meeting etiquette. In some ways, this is the loosest of the ways mentioned. While there is a recommended format for each meeting, many groups eventually make modifications to the formats, adding a sentence here or omitting a phrase there. And when I attend SAA meetings in other cities, the variances in meeting format are often still greater. For example, the announcements may be at a different place in the meeting or there may be a few minutes for each member to do a silent meditation before closing. Yet all SAA meetings are recognizable as SAA meetings. So when I walk into a meeting, even a meeting in another city, I feel safe, as a result I feel as though I know everybody at the meeting, even if I am meeting everyone in the group for the first time.

Starting and ending on time is also important for the safety of the meeting. If I look at a meeting schedule and see that a given meeting I have not attended before starts at seven-thirty pm, then that is the time that I will want to be at the meeting. While I have on occasion arrived late to a meeting, I generally like to be there on time. The opening readings, self-introductions, and so forth are not just a ritual that each meeting observes. Listening to the readings and watching each person introduce him- or herself gives me the chance to shake off the cares of the day and become open to what I will hear over the next hour. I also get that chance to glance around the room and exchange silent greetings with various members whom I know, thus re-establishing that safety that I knew from the last meeting I attended with people I know.

Finally, the notion of respect is most important to the creation of a safe meeting. When I can listen to a person give a complete share without being interrupted or corrected, then I know I will feel safer in sharing when I raise my hand to do so. And when somebody comes to me after a meeting and asks if he can make reference to something I shared, then I know he is

being sensitive to the fact that the share could have been difficult for me and that I might not be ready to go back over that ground. It is no doubt partly for this reason that so many SAA business meetings I attend will read at the beginning of the meeting a code of conduct that emphasizes being "approachable, courteous, and well-mannered."

As I said, there are many ways that an SAA group can carry its message. If the group focuses on the basics of making the meeting safe, as in the ways I have mentioned here, then the chances that it will be able successfully to carry its message to the next sex addict who still suffers become all that much greater.

Electronic Formats Available!

SAA e-Book

The ISO is pleased to announce the availability of the SAA Green Book, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, in downloadable electronic format.

The eBook can be purchased from the ISO office, or online from the SAA Store at www.saa-store.org/book/.

After online purchase is complete, you will receive an e-mail with a link to download a zip file that contains both the mobi (Kindle) and ePUB (Nook) versions of the book. One of these formats can be read on most e-readers available today.

Special thanks go out to an anonymous member of the fellowship who took the time to create the eBook version. Such generous help from volunteer members enhances the capacity of the ISO to support member groups in carrying the SAA message of recovery to sex addicts everywhere.

mp3 Audio Downloads

The ISO is pleased to announce the availability of mp3 format downloads of our convention workshop and speaker recordings.

The files are in mp3 format, which may be played on almost any portable music device or computer.

Currently, the mp3 files are available for convention years 2004 through 2011, and can be purchased from the SAA store at www.saa-store.org/audio.

We will be uploading the remaining past convention years as we get them formatted.

E-mail Addresses

The following is a list of Board E-mail addresses and the LitCom e-mail addresses for the various regions, and the ISO staff E-mail addresses. The Board, LitCom, and the staff are always happy to hear from the fellowship.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees also receives a copy of e-mail to the service addresses of regional Board representatives.

Great Lakes Board Member and Alternate: BoardGL@saa-recovery.org
Intermountain Board Member and Alternate: BoardIM@saa-recovery.org
North Central Board Member and Alternate: BoardNC@saa-recovery.org
Northeast Board Member and Alternate: BoardNE@saa-recovery.org
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Great Lakes LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComGL@saa-litcom.org
Intermountain LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComIM@saa-litcom.org
North Central LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComNC@saa-litcom.org
Northeast LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComNE@saa-litcom.org
North Pacific LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComNP@saa-litcom.org
South Central LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComSC@saa-litcom.org
Southeast LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComSE@saa-litcom.org
Southern Pacific LitCom Member and Alternate: LitComSP@saa-litcom.org
At Large LitCom Member: LitComAL@saa-litcom.org

The Outer Circle Editor: toc@saa-recovery.org

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

ISO Office Location

3890-D North Freeway
Houston, TX 77022

Phone: (713) 869-4902

ISO Office Mailing Address

PO Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270

Toll Free: (800) 477-8191

Website: www.saa-recovery.org

Office e-mail: info@saa-recovery.org

The Outer Circle e-mail: toc@saa-recovery.org

Office Staff

Director of Operations: Joe H. director@saa-iso.org

Associate Director: Chris F. chrisf@saa-iso.org

Information Technician: Jonathan C. webmaster@saa-recovery.org

Information Technician: Daniel B. djb@saa-iso.org

Admin Assistant II: Tim D. info@saa-recovery.org

Outreach Specialist: Klaus P. outreach@saa-recovery.org

Admin Assistant I: Philip A. philip@saa-iso.org

The Outer Circle Staff

Literature Editor: Mike L. toc@saa-recovery.org

ISO News Editor: Chris F. chrisf@saa-iso.org

Design & Layout : Chris F. chrisf@saa-iso.org

REGION REPRESENTED	BOARD MEMBER	BOARD ALTERNATE	LITERATURE COMMITTEE	LIT. COM. ALTERNATE
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How to Submit an Article to *The Outer Circle*

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts...” Step Twelve

First: Write from your experience, strength, and hope. Others may need to hear exactly what you have to say. Suggested Topics are listed below.

Second: Send your article: by e-mail to: toc@saa-recovery.org
 or mail to: ISO
 P. O. Box 70949
 Houston, TX 77270

Third: Send in the below **Release Form**. Download an extra from the SAA website if needed or feel free to make copies.

Submission Deadlines & Suggested Topics		
Next Issues	Deadline	Suggested Topics
Sep-Oct 2012	July 5, 2012	Steps & Traditions 9 & 10, and “ <i>Working the SAA Program</i> ”
Nov-Dec 2012	Sep 5, 2012	Steps & Traditions 11 & 12, and “ <i>The Home Group</i> ”
Jan-Feb 2013	Nov 5, 2012	Steps & Traditions 1 & 2, and “ <i>Friendship within SAA</i> ”
Mar-Apr 2013	Jan 5, 2013	Steps & Traditions 3 & 4
May-Jun 2013	Mar 5, 2013	Steps & Traditions 5 & 6
Jul-Aug 2013	May 5, 2013	Steps & Traditions 7 & 8

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.

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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.

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