

The Outer Circle

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

PO Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

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July - August 2013



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**The following actions were approved by
the Board of Trustees at the
April 20, 2013 Teleconference**

- Approved motion for presentation to the 2013 Delegates for a bylaws amendment to change the composition and method of election of the Board of Trustees and Literature Committee.
 - Approved motion for presentation to the 2013 Delegates for a bylaws amendment to change the composition of the ISO Conference.
 - Approved motion for presentation to the 2013 Delegates to set the 2014 Conference business priorities.
-

**The following actions were approved by
the Board of Trustees at the
May 18, 2013 Teleconference**

- Approved motion to post the entire text of Sex Addicts Anonymous in “read-only” format on the SAA website.
-

**The following actions were approved by
the Board of Trustees at the May 22-26, 2013
Face-to-Face Meetings in Summerlin, NV**

- That the Board of Trustees nominate Jim L. of Birmingham, Alabama for the position of At-Large Trustee for the service year 2013 - 2014.
- That the Conference Motion 2013-D0003 submitted by the Board for consideration at the 2013 Conference delegate meeting be amended prior to consideration by the conference [amendment attached].
- That the Conference Motion 2013-D0004 submitted by the Board for consideration at the 2013 Conference delegate meeting be amended prior to consideration by the conference [amendment attached].
- That the Board approve the budget for the 2014 International Convention.
- That the Board approve the Conference Delegate fees [attached] for the 2014 Conference.
- That the Board establish the Position of Executive Director of the ISO.
- That the Board of Trustees nominate Steve W. of Bloomington, Indiana for the position of At-Large Literature Committee Member for the service year 2013 - 2014.

- That the Board of Trustees nominate Les J. of San Francisco, California for the position of At-Large Literature Committee Member for the service year 2013 - 2014.
- That the Board of Trustees nominate Garrett I. of Birmingham, Alabama for the position of At-Large Literature Committee Member for the service year 2013 - 2014.
- That the Board adopt recommendation on Director Contract [attached].
- That the Board approve the 2013 Conference Special Rules [attached].
- That the Board of Trustees to the ISO of SAA accepts the [attached] bid to host the 2015 Conference and Convention.

Delegate actions at the May 24-25, 2013 International Conference in Summerlin, NV

At the 2013 Conference, the delegates voted on multiple motions, including the creation of a Conference Charter, a Conference Steering Committee, as well as bylaws changes relating to the future structure of the ISO Board, Literature Committee and Conference.

The detailed minutes of the Delegate meeting may be accessed at the ISO's service website, in the "Delegates" section of the Members Area:

<http://saa-iso.org/>

(Contact the ISO office for login information)

The ISO is pleased to announce the approval of
our newest piece of SAA literature:

***“Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings;
Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting”***

is now available online at the ISO website store:

www.saa-store.org

In addition to providing many helpful suggestions for “Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting,” the pamphlet has valuable recovery suggestions and insights that are useful for ***any recovering member or group***, even if a group does not have women members.

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

To the members of the SAA fellowship:

The 2013 annual meeting of the ISO Conference and the Convention in Summerlin were productive and successful, and a debt of gratitude is owed to the Summerlin Convention Committee for their hard work.

At the meeting of the Conference, the delegates:

1. Chose to create a Conference Steering Committee, which will facilitate the planning and coordination of Conference activities with other ISO activities throughout the year.
2. Passed a By-laws amendment giving the Conference the responsibility of electing Board and LitCom members from the fellowship at large, rather than from regional caucuses;
3. Passed a By-laws amendment to change the composition of the Conference to Area-based representation rather than the current group-based representation;
4. Passed a resolution affirming the work of the Conference Charter Committee in developing a draft Conference Charter; and
5. Requested that planning for the 2014 Conference include special rules to allow open discussion and possible amendment of the draft Conference Charter.

The two Bylaws amendments (items #2 and #3 above) must be ratified at the 2014 annual meeting of the Conference before they take effect. Both also contain provisions for implementation over a period of years to allow for a smooth, carefully implemented transition.

The set-up of the delegate meeting room and the business procedures used this year were significantly different from anything done in the past. Delegates were seated at round tables, and each table served as a focal point of small group discussion at various times during the meeting. For the two Bylaws amendments being proposed, the delegates at three or four tables were combined into larger break-out groups that generated ideas for possible amendments to those proposals. Possible modifications of the Bylaws amendments were then offered for consideration by the whole assembly. The final formal debate and vote were conducted in the same manner as in the past.

Discussions at the individual tables and in the break-out groups were very energetic and productive. Many new and creative ideas emerged. Some of the ideas were brought forward as amendments, and others were captured for further consideration, as the operational details of the structural changes are worked out and implemented over the next few years.

The ISO Board of Trustees met on Wednesday and Thursday before the annual meeting of the Conference, and then again on Sunday morning during the convention. Our work included:

- Review of current major ISO projects.
- Reports from the Internal Standing Committees of the Board – Fellowship, Finance and Operations, and Policy.
- Reports from the Conference Charter Committee, 2013 Conference Committee, and ISO-Structure Committee.
- Review of the 2012 ISO financial audit.
- Review of the budget for the 2014 Convention.
- Decision to change the title of the Director of Operations to Executive Director of the ISO.
- Joint meeting with the ISO Literature Committee.
- Acceptance of a bid to host the 2015 Conference/Convention.
- Election of officers for the 2013-2014 service year: Bill I., chair; Jim L., vice-chair; Doug C., secretary; Paul M., vice-secretary; and Wayne K., treasurer.

Kelley K. and Bob H. were elected by the Intermountain regional caucus to serve respectively as trustee and alternate. Bob L. was elected by the North Central caucus and Bryan H. was elected by the South Central caucus to serve as their alternates on the Board.

Attendance at the Summerlin Convention was somewhat lower than forecasted, which has put a temporary strain on ISO finances. The Board is examining ways to address this issue and to improve our process of budgeting for the annual meeting of the Conference and convention.

As a member of the fellowship, you can help by financially supporting the ISO, which provides many forms of support for member groups world-wide. A good opportunity to show your gratitude is coming up soon -- “Freedom from Addiction” week. Please consider giving a bit more this year.

In service, ISO Board of Trustees

Trustees	Alternates
Richard S. – Great Lakes	Charlie H. – Great Lakes
Kelley K – Intermountain	Bob H. – Intermountain
Tim T. – North Central	Bob L – North Central
Bill I. – North Pacific	Clif G. – North Pacific
Wayne K. – Northeast	Carl D. – Northeast
Paul M. – South Central	Bryan H – South Central
Tom W. - Southeast	Shira K. – Southeast
Doug C. – Southern Pacific	Antonio B. – Southern Pacific
Jim L. – At Large	

Note: ISO email addresses for the trustees and alternates are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

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>	
<i>Safe & Sexually Sober Meetings</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 e-mail) 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.

July 28
August 25
September 22
October 27
September 24

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 Available for the Visually Impaired

The National Library Service has 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 available format.***

Seventh Tradition Committee

Fifth Annual Freedom from Addiction Week

Dear Members of the SAA Fellowship,

I recently had the opportunity to attend the first international conference on sex addiction. I was able to hear from helping professionals from multiple countries talk about how their country's social medicine all but excludes sexual addiction as a real disease. Our twelve-step fellowship is many times the only resource available for the suffering sex addict.

Getting our message of experience, strength and hope into other countries and helping to support the growth of twelve-step meetings in other countries is one of ISO's highest priorities. One of the most effective ways to support the growth of Twelve Step meetings in a different country is to offer our literature in their native language. Translations are expensive but we are making progress in setting up a process of having our literature translated, printed and distributed in the country of origin. I estimate this will reduce our cost by around forty to fifty percent. We need support from our members and groups to start the process.

We have members who have requested our literature be translated from multiple countries including; Slovenia, Russia, South Korea, Israel, Canada (French), Sweden and Denmark. We have meetings in over twenty-five countries that could benefit from having our literature in their language.

We know sexual addiction has destroyed lives, relationships, marriages and families. Sexual addiction takes away many of those things that are priceless; intimacy, spirituality, relationships. Sexual addiction kept us living in a dark place and destroyed our dreams. The ISO needs your support so everyone around the globe who is suffering from sexual addiction can hear our message of experience, strength hope in many, many different languages.

I believe in the Twelve Steps. I know it is possible to live your life free of sexual addiction. If you had the chance to give someone the gift of freedom from sexual addiction, would you? For many of us who are in recovery and living a life free from sexual addiction, the answer is yes. By coming together we can stop the addiction from being passed from one generation to the next.

The ISO of SAA's mission statement is "The ISO serves member groups by helping them carry their message of recovery to the sex addict who still suffers". By giving to this appeal, you are enabling us to help you change lives. In order to reach the suffering addict and help our member groups carry their message of experience, strength and hope, we need financial resources. Please consider giving what you can.

A few of our projects in progress:

- We have just received approval to put the entire SAA Green Book on our website in a read only format
- We are working to enhance our outreach website by improving the meeting search and printing functionality
- We are working on a fifty-two week meditation booklet, which should be available in the fourth quarter of 2013
- The writing and editing of our complete 366-day meditation book continues
- Public service announcements using audio files on social websites

As we celebrate our Fourth of July weekend with family and friends, consider the many sex addicts still suffering. With the support of the fellowship and grace from our Higher Power, we have been able to carry the message to many who suffer from our addiction. We ask for your financial contributions today to help us broaden our message to many, many more. Please be generous with your gifts; for many, your gift will be a gift of life. Please remember the many who gave so that you might receive our message of hope.

Please consider reading this letter to your meeting group. We ask that you consider contributing as individuals, or by passing the Seventh Tradition basket a second time at your meeting during one week in July to collect additional funds for the ISO.

Of course, as always, you may donate online at:

<https://saa-store.org/7thTradition/FreedomWeek/>

The ISO of SAA, the Board of Trustees, and Staff all wish you the best with your recovery.

Sincerely yours,

Joe H.

Executive Director, ISO of SAA

ISO Board of Trustees

ISO Income/Expense Summary as of May 31, 2013

	May 13	Monthly Avg	Jan - May 13
Income			
Sales	19,572.20	18,571.27	92,856.35
Shipping & Handling	1,707.24	1,827.24	9,136.19
Donations	20,551.42	22,978.23	114,891.17
Investment Income	17.06	1,000.65	5,003.27
Other Income	0.00	10.00	50.00
Convention Income	20,146.24	8,894.91	44,474.54
Delegate Meeting Income	3,400.00	1,160.00	5,800.00
Total Income	65,394.16	54,442.30	272,211.52
Cost Of Goods Sold	7,566.68	7,344.47	36,722.36
Gross Profit	57,827.48	47,097.83	235,489.16
Expense			
Wages	22,203.13	19,097.18	95,485.89
Benefits	1,879.89	3,461.73	17,308.64
Payroll Taxes	1,720.89	1,589.81	7,949.05
Payroll Expenses	18.54	18.54	92.70
Insurance	273.91	442.75	2,213.75
Financial Charges	1,550.53	1,266.40	6,332.01
Communications	511.76	563.62	2,818.08
Occupancy Expenses	1,572.43	1,607.25	8,036.24
Office Expenses	1,768.64	1,458.10	7,290.49
The Outer Circle	1,302.05	851.97	4,259.85
Professional Fees	1,035.00	414.00	2,070.00
Depreciation	175.00	175.00	875.00
Bad Debts/Refunds	10.97	14.51	72.56
Travel-Related Expenses	4,221.91	3,817.73	19,088.64
Board/Committee Expenses	1,283.20	3,407.23	17,036.13
Convention Expenses	5,774.62	1,700.58	8,502.89
Delegate Meeting Expenses	819.97	163.99	819.97
Total Expense	46,122.44	40,050.38	200,251.89
Net Income	11,705.04	7,047.45	35,237.27

Financial Results for May 2013

In the month of May we had a surplus of \$11,705.04. We had budgeted for a surplus of \$9,529.00.

Our sales revenue for the SAA Green Book exceeded our estimate by \$2,445.39 for May and has exceeded our estimate by \$7,785.89 for 2013. The increase in May was due partly to selling books during the convention.

Our pamphlet and booklet sales exceeded our estimate by \$1,025.00 for May and have exceeded our estimate by 4,251.68 for 2013. Our bronze medallion sales exceeded our estimate by \$95.00 in May and have exceeded our estimate by \$2,102.39 in 2013. Our chip sales exceeded our estimate by \$322.58 in May and has exceeded our estimate by \$759.43 in 2013.

Our total sales for May exceeded our estimate by \$3,132.20.

Individual donations exceeded our estimate by \$107.30 for May and have exceeded our estimate by \$1,956.30 for 2013. Group donations were below our estimate by \$218.88 in May and are \$6,051.13 below our estimate for 2013.

Our product inventory is valued at \$49,432.50.

Our expenses exceeded our estimate by \$2,774.44 in May. Part of the increased expenses was due to repair of one of our office air conditioners at a cost of around \$1,100.00.

Summary of the annual budget: (January 1, 2013 to May 31, 2013)

- Sales have exceeded our budget estimate by \$14,256.35
- Donations are below our budget estimate by \$4,094.83
- Expenses have exceeded our budget estimate by \$7,740.89
- Net surplus has exceeded our budget estimate by \$2,917.27

Our operational reserve amount is \$136,100.00 and is fully funded. This is the estimated amount necessary to run the office for four months, and is reset each January.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In Your Service,

Joe H.

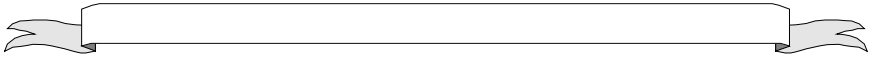
Executive Director

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.

I'm going to break my long-standing tradition of writing a full-length article about the recently concluded convention. I am doing so mostly because we have such an excellent article about the convention from Garrett I. in this issue. I can still take convention-related articles for the next issue if you have something you want to share and couldn't set it down on paper in time for this issue.



*Pleas be thinking about serving as the
next editor of "The Outer Circle"*



Of course, I still can't refrain from making a few comments about the convention myself. For the last few years, I've been saying that I was inching back towards being a fully participating member in all aspects of the convention, as I was in the first conventions I attended, starting in 1995. For some reason, conventions have turned into a perfect time for me to start comparing my insides to the outsides of others, fixating on imagined slights and so forth, and withdrawing as a result. While I definitely felt like I made some major strides in Vancouver last year, I still didn't feel like I was quite "there."

This convention was definitely the busiest in terms of business work and hours required of me of any convention I have ever been to. I couldn't really withdraw too much because of all the group work that had to be done. I did find the occasional opportunity to get a little time to myself, such as the walk I had back to the hotel from our Wednesday night Board/LitCom/Convention Committee dinner location, a distance of a little less than a mile and a half, on one of the few genuinely pleasant evenings remaining in the Summerlin area for this summer.

The business-related work turned out to be much less onerous than I had feared. I certainly wasn't bored, and a lot of the time it was very enjoyable.

Still, Friday night and the actual start of the convention were quickly approaching, and I could start to feel those old desires to withdraw. After three days of grueling work, I certainly would have felt justified in hopping on a hotel shuttle and going into Las Vegas, just to see what was there. Instead, HP reminded me that passing on the opening ceremonies would have started me off once again on that path to isolation, and I chose instead to stay and listen to the excellent keynote speaker, visit the hospitality suite, and go to an SAA meeting instead. This started me off on a good path that stayed with me for the rest of the weekend.

And HP saw that somebody was with me just about every step of the rest of the weekend. On top of that, I had two excellent and very considerate roommates over the course of the five nights I was there. I did eventually find my way to Las Vegas proper and even there I was accompanied by a young man who later told me that I helped him to stay sober during our two-or-so hours in town; be that as it may, I was grateful to have him there because I can get lost in a two-car garage, and if he hadn't been with me, I might still be wandering around Las Vegas trying to find the shuttle going back to the hotel; so, my gentle companion—you know who you are—thank you.

Anyway, it was a very invigorating and satisfying trip. I came back home refreshed and ready to continue to “trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.”

So, without further ado, I'll introduce the topic for the March/April 2014 issue. I thought I'd go with one of the slogans this time, and the one I picked is “one day at a time.” Can you think of an occasion where living your life “one day at a time” was especially helpful to you? If so, I'd like to hear about it, and I'll bet some of our other readers would too.

I've already gotten a couple of articles for the September/October issue, whose topic is “Gratitude.” Even though the official deadline is July 5, I'm willing to take articles until July 15 if the extension will be of help. Articles on Steps and Traditions Nine and Ten are also welcome. And remember that the topic for November/December is “Right Thinking.” What is right thinking to you and what have you done to get into a place of right thinking? Those articles (as well as articles on Steps Eleven and Twelve) are due by September 5.

I'd really like your reaction to the article “Relationships and Tradition One” by Freeman P. Freeman has written a similar article on each of the Traditions, and your feedback will be very helpful to me in deciding whether to continue running them.

Finally, my Higher Power has led me to offer to step down from the editorship of *The Outer Circle* after the 2014 convention. My last issue as

editor will be the July/August 2014 issue, since I have to begin putting that issue together before the convention. I will have more to say about my tenure as editor in that issue. I will of course be working with the LitCom in the hiring process for the new editor. Please be thinking about serving as the next editor of *The Outer Circle*.

So have a wonderful first part of the summer. I look forward to talking with you next issue.

Dear Will

Submitted by the Men's Outreach Committee

Dear Will,

I have been in the SAA program for about six months. My sponsor keeps telling me that if I'm ever going to get anywhere in this program, I have to have more "humility." If I didn't have humility I wouldn't even be here. What can I say or do to get him off of my case?

—Already Humbled Enough

Dear AHE,

Now, Will knows you didn't honestly think that he was going to side with you against your sponsor on this one. At least he hopes you didn't.

Will believes that part of the reason you are having difficulty with the idea of humility is that you are confusing it with humiliation. Welcome to the club; many people make that mistake, a perfectly reasonable one given the sound of the two words. Also, there is that phrase from the *Twelve and Twelve* that Will wishes he could say in a more clever way: "It was only by repeated humiliations that we were forced to learn something about humility" (p. 72). And who wants to be humiliated? But that is not what humility is about.

It probably won't come as a surprise that both words derive from the same Latin root. However, they traveled different paths through Middle French and Middle English until they got to us today. Will would explain these paths to you, but he is only allowed so many words to answer these questions. Besides, he's not sure that he really understands it himself.

However, Will wants to share with you something he does understand; at least this is how it was explained to him. The original Latin word that these two words come from meant “low.” One thing that is “low” is the ground, that thing that snakes and cockroaches crawl along. Not that Will has anything against snakes and cockroaches, you understand; well, snakes anyway.

However, Will was told that the ground is also a place where he should have his feet firmly planted. When he does, he is aware of his place in the universe. Now he gets to provide a quote from *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 43 to be exact: “[Humility] comes from a realistic view of ourselves, a knowledge of both our strengths and limitations.” In other words, Will knows that he is not one of those snakes or, uh, cockroaches, and by the same token, he knows that he is not God. Will’s sponsor told him a long time ago that there is a big difference between God and Will, that difference being that God doesn’t go around all day thinking that he is Will.

Now that that difference is, Will hopes, clear to you, there is another wonderful quote about humility in *Sex Addicts Anonymous* that he wants to share with you. This one is also on page 43, immediately preceding the one just above: “Humility is a result of the self-honesty we have gained through working the preceding steps.” When Will worked those Steps, and especially when he worked Step Five with his sponsor, he started learning “the exact nature of [his] wrongs,” something that his sponsor was not shy about sharing with him. Will didn’t really like it at first; he was resisting the concept of humility, just as you have said that you are doing.

However, as time went on, Will was happy to have a better idea of what his wrongs were. When he got into an emotional bind or a conflict with somebody else, he was able to look back on the wrongs that his sponsor happily shared with him and start to be able to pinpoint where he was wrong in this situation or that. As time went on, Will started seeing that people were being kinder to him, as Will began to stop taking his character defects out on others.

It sounds as though you are still fairly new in the program. Will is hoping that you will give the whole concept of humility a chance. And while you’re at it, you might want to check out Jim L’s article on humility in the Jan/Feb 2013 issue of *The Outer Circle*. Regardless of whether you have made it to Step Seven yet, Will believes that once you see the gifts that you can obtain from humility, you will be as big a fan of it as he is.

—Will

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,

I have acted out with someone in my face-to-face group. What do I do? Is my meeting still safe to go to?

—Can't Go Back

Dear Can't Go Back,

When a former acting out partner is present at a meeting, it can be very triggering and intimidating. Here are some suggestions from SAA members' experience:

If you are having difficulty staying sober, it might be helpful to attend a different meeting for a period of time. You and your sponsor could work together to determine which meeting(s) and for how long. If another face-to-face meeting is not an option, telemeetings are available.

Some members have found it helpful to discuss the situation openly with both members and their sponsors present. For instance, you might work out a schedule where the two members do not attend the same meetings of the group in question. Other women have found it helpful to carefully choose their seats at a meeting. For example, you could choose to sit in a place at the meeting where you couldn't see the person who triggers you and to sit beside a support person who is aware of the situation.

Above all, remember that sobriety is the goal and being willing to go to any lengths to stay sober is of the utmost importance.

—Grace

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

Thinking Report

by Harvey A.

I recently became aware of a useful technique for doing an on-the-spot inventory in my prison cognitive intervention class called “doing a Thinking Report.” It is especially useful when I have gone through an upsetting experience. Quite often, the reason I get upset is due to my thinking and attitudes. The thinking report method helps me uncover what the real issue was and is really a type of inventory.

The first part of doing a thinking report is to write out an objective description of the facts. It should not contain my opinions or feelings and I do not put thoughts in this part. The facts I write out are just the physical events, those anyone watching a movie could write down.

Next, I write out the thoughts I can remember having during the event. This part can include interpretations, opinions, and other thoughts that occur or occurred at the time of the event but should not include emotions.

The third part is the emotions. Here I write out what I was feeling: sad, angry, frustrated, hurt, upset, etc.

I carefully compartmentalize each of these sections and I only include content that relates to that section. After I have written this out, I try to find the relationship between my thoughts and emotions to ascertain what happened, or what attitude or belief my emotions and thoughts are reflecting. I ask myself why a particular situation upset me; eventually, I can trace my reaction to an attitude or belief that is reflected by my thoughts and/or emotions. I write down this information as well.

Then I consider if my reaction is really meeting my needs or if it measures to the way I want to live my life, or if I need to modify my attitude so an event like that is not as upsetting. It’s strange how minor things can be so upsetting, but unless I do this exercise I may not realize how minor it is or how dysfunctional my response was. This exercise can diminish the power of negative emotions and my tendency to resort to them.

I take these steps as a daily inventory technique when I am upset about something.

People, Places, and Ideas by Garrett I.

When I wrote down my Fourth Step inventory, I wrote down a lot of people, places, and ideas in that left column. I thought that people, places, and ideas would always be sources of resentment for me but as I reflect back on my time at the convention this year in Summerlin, Nevada, I realize that God is using people, places, and ideas to enlarge upon my spiritual awakening and extend my recovery in ways I never thought possible. Here are a few examples.

“You can be my fourth phone number!” I can’t remember if it was fourth or fifth but I will never forget the excitement in my brother’s voice when he realized that he had met another friend “trudging the Road of Happy Destiny.” I had met him at a twelve-step meeting on the first night of the convention and, though I had been looking for him, I had not seen him since. Now, here we were on the last day of the convention, me getting off the elevator on the fifth floor, headed to my room to pack my stuff, and him, getting on the elevator after having made one last trip to the hospitality suite before it closed up. In the few minutes that we stood in front of the elevators talking, we shared so much of our lives because, though we were shaking hands for the first time, he was no stranger to me and I was no stranger to him. We had a common problem and a common solution and we both look forward to staying in contact with each other so we can share even more of our experience, strength, and hope. He had made it a point to intentionally meet and get phone numbers from a certain number of people while he was at the convention. What a great idea! I am so grateful for the people I met during the delegate conference, at the nightly meetings, at the tables during the meals, and in the hallways between workshops. These are truly some of the best people in the world.

The places of the conventions I have attended will always live on in my memories. At lunch on Friday, two people at my table were discussing which city was more spiritual, New Orleans (a former convention host) or Las Vegas (the current convention host). Only in our fellowship! I have had the amazing privilege of being able to be with several others from my local intergroup at the last three conventions. Even though we live in the same city, nothing brings us together like traveling thousands of miles to go to a convention. I don’t think we will ever forget the tableside guacamole in Houston, the dim sum in Vancouver, or the Thai burgers and stromboli at the two restaurants recommended to us in Summerlin. I will always remember the view from the hospitality suite in Vancouver and the beautiful scenery as we drove through Red Rock Canyon. I will always remember these as places where I increased my conscious contact with God as I appreciated God’s world with friends who care about me and my recovery, and increasing my conscious contact with God there helps me be aware of my Higher Power’s presence at home.

On my own, I have ideas of how to act out. On my own, I think all of my ideas are brilliant and others' ideas are "less than fantastic". I left Summerlin with many new ideas on recovery. The best part about it is that these aren't untested ideas that someone gave me to try but these ideas are ones that have passed the test of "actually working for them." I had a lot of ideas at this convention, some good, and some bad. I'm thankful to have been able to share those ideas with others in recovery, hear their ideas, and listen for God's voice in the midst of it. In sharing these ideas I saw more defects of character I can ask God to remove and more simple spiritual tools laid at my feet.

Making that fourth-step list moved me toward giving up negative ways of living that perpetuated my acting out and insanity. Now, as I try to practice recovery principles in all of my activities, I can make a new list, a gratitude list. The annual SAA convention always shows me people, places, and ideas to be grateful for. Thanks be to my Higher Power for the Steps that show me how to surrender to God's care and protection and thanks be to God for the conventions that introduce me to and remind me of people, places, and ideas to be grateful for in my new life of sobriety.

Volunteer Services Needed

Want to be of service to the Fellowship that supports you?

Not sure where to get started?

Contact the ISO!

or go to **www.saa-iso.org/**

and select "Volunteer" to fill out a volunteer form.

Step Eight

by Al D.

“In Step Eight we claim both our integrity and our compassion, and become willing to free ourselves from the guilt we have carried.” (Sex Addicts Anonymous, p. 46)

Stories of animal abuse always disturb me. I have stumbled upon stories on the internet that have troubled me so much that my mind still goes back to them from time to time, even years later. I'm sure a lot of those reactions I have are based on memories of my childhood.

While I'm not sure I would go so far as to label myself an abuser, I certainly did, for example, get a lot of pleasure out of tormenting the family dog while I was growing up, for example, pestering her while she was trying to sleep to the point that she would start growling at me. After one of these growling incidents, my mother said, “Albert, you must have a mean streak.” This statement stayed with me for a very long time.

Jumping years ahead, I remember once coming back from an out-of-town trip that lasted a week and a half. The cat I had at the time, named Edgar, was an indoor/outdoor cat, and when I got back, he was nowhere to be seen. My initial reaction was that he had either been run over by a car, or, more likely, that he was angry at me for staying gone for so long. He showed up a couple of days later and it turned out that the reason he had disappeared was because he had become ill and was hiding somewhere in hopes of healing. I still remember his pitiful “meow” when he did show up.

After a couple of days where Edgar had shown no improvement, I finally called the vet's office, told the receptionist his symptoms, and was told in no uncertain terms that I needed to get him into the office immediately. When I got there, I learned that he had contracted an ailment that affects both male and female cats but that becomes life-threatening very quickly for the males. I felt horribly guilty that I had waited as long as I did before calling the vet, hoping that Edgar would improve on his own. Once again, “you must have a mean streak” rang in my ears. It took somebody else reminding me that I most certainly wouldn't have waited if I had had the slightest inkling of the nature of his ailment. So this was just a question of my being at the beginning of a particular learning curve, and yet I was willing to make it an issue of my being evil.

Several years later, after I bought my first house, I put off buying a microwave out of the belief that I was some kind of monster and would eventually use it to harm a pet. At the time, I was new to the SAA program, and was becoming open to allowing my Higher Power to speak

to me, through both my sponsor and other people in recovery. Accordingly, I began to learn “the nature of my wrongs” and my “defects of character” in the Fifth through Seventh Steps, and “animal abuser” did not turn up in that list. In the Eighth Step, I was able to put the family dog on my amends list and also started to remember all the times I was good to her, times I had allowed myself to forget. In other words, I learned that I had definite character assets where animals are concerned. I eventually got up the courage to buy a microwave and, needless to say, my fears about misusing the thing turned out to be groundless.

I’ve had many companion animals since then, both domesticated ones and strays who hang around the neighborhood. My decisions as to their care are based on the best information I have at the time, which sometimes has not been good enough; I have lost some as a result, either because they disappeared or they died, but most of them have lived long lives. While I still feel a lot of sadness when I lose an animal, that sadness is now tinged not with the stultifying guilt that I used to feel, but rather with the reminder that I am a gentle and compassionate person who has done his best where those small, helpless creatures have been concerned. And, of course, I have a greater store of knowledge now, and am less likely to make the mistakes I’ve made in the past.

Thanks to the SAA program and my Higher Power working through it, I have been able to reclaim character assets that I disowned so long ago that I was not even aware that they were there to be disowned. I have a much greater trust in myself these days, and that trust has extended to a belief in my ability to solve the problems that come up in my day-to-day living.

Relationships and Tradition One

by Freeman P.

[Editor's Note: This is the first part of a twelve-part article I received called "Relationships and the Twelve Traditions." I'm interested in hearing your reactions to this article before deciding whether to run all twelve parts of it.]

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity. (Sex Addicts Anonymous, p. 78)

The Traditions may be applied to all relationships, be they friendships or romantic relationships. The article, however, is written as if applied to a primary romantic relationship.

This writing was inspired by an AA cassette tape I once heard called "The Twelve Traditions at Work and at Home," as well as "The Traditions Checklist" from the AA Grapevine, and a Twelve Traditions workshop outlining the "oughts" and "ought nots" discussed in the Twelve and Twelve. It was also inspired by our own Green Book.

The only source directly quoted in this essay has been the Green Book. All others are merely used as inspiration. However, due to their great influence upon the writing, I think they should be documented to give credit where credit is due. After all, nothing I have written is original thought.

I continually gain a deeper understanding of the Traditions. Tradition One clearly points to the fact that "we can't recover alone." For myself, the insidious disease of sex addiction strengthens its grip on me when I isolate. When I am alone, the sense of guilt, shame, despair and hopelessness seem all-pervasive. Then, in an attempt to escape this overwhelming pain, I choose to medicate through obsessive sexual thoughts, followed by addictive behaviors. My "recovery depends on the well-being of all." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 78)

Now I am in recovery. From isolation I choose to reach out to the group instead of feeding my addiction. Only through our unity as a group will I, as an individual, be able to remain sober/abstinent. "The first Tradition channels . . . energy towards a single goal: the welfare of recovering sex addicts. . . [W]e put this common need ahead of our individual desires . . ." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 78)

As we continue to work together with this common goal, we are able to set aside our personal differences and ideals in order to maintain SAA unity. "[U]nited by faith in a loving Higher Power, sex addicts will continue to find recovery in SAA." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 79)

As I adapted the Twelve Traditions to apply to relationships in SAA I modified and/or expanded the wording to make each one more applicable. I

refer to them as the "Relationship Form."

Tradition One (Relationship Form): Our common welfare should come first; our relationship depends upon our unity.

The first question I ask myself is, "Do I want to be in this relationship?" Using guidelines from my Three Circles for Abstinence helps me determine if the relationship is healthy or should be avoided. Speaking to a sponsor is invaluable; I highly recommend it.

If I have decided I want to be in the relationship I will want to be committed. I know I am committed when I am willing to go to any length to make the relationship work. I recognize we are two separate individuals in a relationship; we are both sober and working our individual recovery. My partner has a life, and I have mine. We are complete and whole on our own. From this foundation of complete wholeness, we choose to share ourselves with one another.

I do not tolerate abuse of any type, be it physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, social, or sexual. I do not tolerate abuse on any level. Aside from abuse, we can work through all other issues. I know couples who have been able to work through infidelity and build a healthy, life-enhancing relationship.

The Green Book tells us that "Disagreements are a natural part of any healthy community." This also applies to relationships. From time to time we are going to disagree. We are able to disagree without being disagreeable. By living our lives using the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as guidelines helps us focus on our unity. In a committed relationship we are to be unified, no matter what. Just as my recovery takes one hundred percent commitment, so too does a relationship. I remember that I have committed myself to go to any length to make this relationship work.

At times we will argue. However, we never argue in public; we do not bring up the past or each other's families, nor are we abusive in word or action. To do these things would only add fuel to the fire. Fires burn until the fuel is gone, further injuring the one I love and causing greater harm. At times there will be a need to schedule time to discuss a particular disagreement when both parties may be physically and emotionally present. As stated, abuse of any kind is intolerable.

To help me express myself, I have learned to ask three questions: 1) Is it kind?; 2) Is it true?; 3) Is it necessary? If I am unable to answer "yes" to all three questions, it is best not to say anything. I have also had to learn how to express my thoughts, feelings, and needs in a healthy manner. I have found the following format indispensable: "When you . . . , I feel I want . . ." For example, "When you raise your voice and yell, I feel scared. I want to feel safe when we argue. Can we agree not to yell at each

other?" Using this format helps me be assertive in expressing my wants and needs.

In every situation there are only three options: 1) I can accept the situation as it is; 2) I can assert myself for a change; 3) I can remove myself from the situation. Since I have determined this to be a healthy relationship and that I am going to any length to make it work, the third option is out; it doesn't work for me. If I attempt to accept the situation the way it is and find myself seething with resentment, I will become unhealthy. By asserting myself, I have the opportunity to make my wants and needs known, so a compromise may be established.

In my recovery and my primary relationship, I have a strong commitment, no matter what. I have simply decided to do whatever it takes, no reservations. I have a steady commitment to make it work.

My recovery and my relationships depend upon unity.

The ISO is pleased to announce the approval of
our newest piece of SAA literature:

***“Safe and Sexually Sober Meetings;
Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting”***

is now available online at the ISO website store:

www.saa-store.org

In addition to providing many helpful suggestions for “Helping Women Feel Welcome in Your Meeting,” the pamphlet has valuable recovery suggestions and insights that are useful for ***any recovering member or group***, even if a group does not have women members.

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

Powerless I Am

By Paul P.

Higher Power, help me today
Powerless I admit
Show me the light,
Teach me bit by bit.

Easy concept
Want to stop but can't
Remind me of the pain
Worth reciting the chant.

Like a rubber band,
Tension on each end,
Gets the better of me,
Messages you always send.

The temptation before me,
Like a magnet it seems,
Give me some strength,
As only my higher power deems.

Play the movie to the end,
Recall that I won't win,
Powerless I am,
Patience won't wear thin.

Some things I can't do,
Others may seem okay,
I've defined my limits,
It's gotta be the only way!

Some others can engage,
They may be exempt,
I know that line in the sand,
Rules that can't be bent.

Today I live,
Know what gets me in that bind,
I will live today,
Serenity I will find.

The Daily Inventory

by James R.

When I first came into recovery, I believed that I would no longer have any difficulties once I had gone through the steps. Well, that turned out not quite to be the case. And this is where the daily inventory comes in.

I wish I were one of those people who claim to have only “high-bottom problems.” I suppose that in a sense that is actually true; after all, it’s been many years since I’ve found myself in the back of a police car. It’s even been a long while since I had to apologize to someone else for making him or her cry. Yes, I once was so harsh with a man that he started crying.

However, I do think of some of my problems as being overwhelming, at least when I first encounter them. It is at these times that I fall back on my good pal, the daily inventory. At different times, I’ve chosen different situations as a backdrop for doing my daily inventory.

My job, for example, is a shining example of encountering situations where I can temporarily feel vanquished. There have been times when I have gone and found an empty office somewhere, moved a chair in front of the door, and gotten down on my knees and prayed for a little bit of calm. Sometimes I’ve found that going to the gym and riding the stationary bike gives me a chance to focus on the problems of the day.

I am thinking of our annual conventions as I write these words, since I have been to a number of them. There has been more than one occasion when I have gone to the convention in less than the best frame of mind, since life has this tendency to keep happening even up to the time when I actually step onto the plane. So I’m grateful that there is always a meditation room where I can go calm down and spend time to take such an inventory.

Not that I have always taken advantage of such rooms and opportunities to slow down. For example, I remember the 1998 convention in Hampton, Virginia. At the time, I understood the daily inventory from an intellectual standpoint, but I hadn’t really internalized the concept yet. I went there nursing a broken heart, feeling as if I were the worst person on earth, and not wanting to be around anybody. I did not want to go, and only went because I knew there were people there counting on me for various things. I spent a lot of that convention hanging out at a restaurant near the hotel and stuffing my feelings with food. I contrast this situation with the 2004 convention in Dallas where I was carrying another broken heart. Once again, I really didn’t feel like being around a lot of people, and I spent a fair amount of that convention in the meditation room, allowing myself to feel my pain and grief and owning my part in the situation. Needless to say, I felt much more prepared to face the situation when I got home in 2004 than I did in 1998.

I think the best part of the daily inventory is that it counters my inclination to react immediately. Recently, I came home to find a note attached to my front door from the homeowners' association. It seems that the three trees lining my driveway have gotten so big that they are blocking the view of the front door of the house, and the note indicated that I had to trim them back or face being fined. They are arboretum trees and can't be trimmed back without looking barren and probably being traumatized in the process

My immediate reaction was to call a man who had done tree trimming work for me in the past and ask him to come out the very next day and take all three of the trees down. However, then I started to slow down and take a look at the "nature of my wrongs," in this case my *modus operandi*: in a stressful situation, to do something—anything—that will temporarily allow me to feel better, and deal with the fallout later. The fallout in this case would have been my reaction to having killed three trees when it may not have been necessary.

I calmed down and compared this situation to others where I have felt that I had to react immediately, and then had to deal with the cost, sometimes emotional but indeed sometimes financial (i.e., my tendency to throw money at a problem to fix it, and then try to fix what I have "fixed"). I made some phone calls, both to program folks and to people who worked with trees for a living. After sitting, praying, and pondering, I called the man back and said I wanted to think for a few days as to the best way to handle this situation. The next day I wrote a letter to the homeowner's association, explained why I thought it was a bad idea to trim the trees as it requested, and offered to talk with them and find a better solution. At worst, I had bought myself a little time to get used to the idea of taking the trees down, and at best, perhaps there will be a better solution. I did eventually find somebody who may be willing to transplant a couple of the trees, which for me would be the best all-around answer, certainly preferable to killing the poor things. This situation is still ongoing, so I don't yet have any sort of closure on it; however, it does look as though I'll be able to resolve this matter without killing any of the trees.

So if I had to say what is my favorite part of doing a daily inventory, it is that it helps me to slow down. I can turn over my crisis situations, and wait to see what answer I get from my Higher Power.

Humility, Not Humiliation: Letting Others Know Who I Am

by Terry H.

I began going to SAA in 1999. Prior to joining the program, I had begun attending Codependents Anonymous meetings. Today, I understand that my codependency drives my sexual acting out, which includes making contact with men on the internet or phone chat lines and having sex with them. For a long time I have been seeking intimacy without risk. I looked for intimacy that I have not felt capable of finding in a mutual and giving relationship. To stop seeking anonymous sex, I have had to look at what drives my codependent relating. What I am most afraid of is feeling humiliated or rejected. I am prone to feeling these feelings when I think someone I am close to does not care about me as much as I care about him or her. I struggle with being overly sensitive and can be hyper-vigilant towards perceived slights and emotional threats.

In the last few years, my Higher Power has challenged me to take more responsibility for my defensiveness. I believe that my being adopted, being rejected for not being able to play sports when growing up and being gay have each contributed to the barriers that make it more difficult for me to have healthy intimate relationships. While my defenses may have helped me feel safe in the past, as an adult they have created walls between me and those I desire to be close to. Because of these insecure feelings, I am prone to periodically isolating myself from those I have felt closest to. Underneath this isolation is the core belief that “no one will love me as I am.”

A significant aspect of my codependency has been a tendency to develop relationships with others who have unhealed trauma. I tell myself that if I try to meet the other person’s unmet emotional needs, that person will like me more, become attached, and then not leave. Part of my recovery from codependency requires that I do not establish relationships with others on emotional “quid pro quos.” My inner child might feel safe and warm as a result of the “guarantee” that comes from getting close to others with unhealed trauma. But I know that a mutually loving and caring relationship cannot be built when both individuals are trying to get unmet parenting needs met from the other.

Now, I try to avoid emotional quid pro quos. This increases the risk I had tried so long to avoid: the fear of feeling humiliated and rejected. One way I work through this fear and practice healthy intimacy is by reminding myself that I don’t feel threatened and afraid because someone I have strong feelings for is going to humiliate and reject me – the constant theme in the three experiences that inform my core beliefs about myself.

Today when I am getting closer to someone, my challenge when old feelings arise is to remind myself that there is a difference between feeling humiliated and being humble before I say or do something that will later cause remorse or grief. I can choose to react humbly and moderately, one day at a time. If I don't follow this path, I am at risk of isolating myself and seeking anonymous sex as a way to cope with emotionally chaotic feelings.

The Big Book says that the key to all my problems is acceptance. Rather than trying to manipulate those I get close to so they don't leave and I never feel humiliated, I can keep in mind that each of us has our own stories. I do not have to treat them or myself as cast members in my story. So long as I seek to control myself and the other I feel close to in order to avoid my deepest fears, I will feel justified in acting out my anger and shame when inevitable conflicts and difficult feelings arise. Today, I can remind myself that these feelings are temporary. By practicing acceptance I can replace my core belief that no one will love me as I am with the new belief that people will love and accept me if I let them know who I am. In this way, I can continue growing into the person I believe God wants me to become, one worthy of contentment and serenity in my relationships with self and others.

Sponsoring and Inner Child Work

by Dave R.

I can hear the howls already: “Inner child work is therapy and we don’t do therapy in our groups.” What I call “inner child work” can be done in a twelve-step context, but is not for everyone and certainly, for some in our fellowship, should never be done.

Why do I use the language of “inner child” with some sponsees? The first reason is honesty. Recently, a sponsee acted out after a long period of abstinence but could not give any reason for that acting out. It had seemingly come “out of the blue.” This sponsee had some early childhood trauma and had significant resentments still from that time – but was in major denial about those resentments. By using the language of “inner child,” he was able to connect with, own up to, and heal those resentments.

The second reason is even more important; that reason is working the steps. When people endure trauma as children, some of them dissociate during that trauma. The important thing about childhood dissociation is that when it happens, part of the person could be still trapped in it. That part of the person needs to work the steps also. However, this process can be quite different from and take quite a bit longer than some other ways of working the steps.

What does it mean to have a sponsee work the steps for that inner child? I start with the basics: Is that “child” acting out and is the adult sponsee unable to manage it (Step One)? If so, what would it mean for that “child to come to believe that a power outside of it is able to help it” (Step Two)? This can be a difficult process. I have one sponsee who stated that he did not like that child inside himself. In my recovery, I had a time where parts of me deeply distrusted my adult self and I needed to simply spend time listening to that part of me in order to help that part come to believe that anyone would listen or be trustworthy.

Step Three is making the decision to change my life. In this case, it includes changing my behavior to allow that “inner child” to live in healthy ways. This means taking actions so that the “inner child” expresses emotions in age appropriate ways. Often, that “inner child” has had shaming or punishments for trying to do those appropriate actions and thus, does not want to do them and acts out instead. Am I willing to take the actions that a higher power may want me to take so that the “inner child” may express things in healthy ways?

Step Four, when dealing with childhood trauma, has extra implications. Children tend to build a moral foundation between the ages of five and ten. When trauma happens prior to that time, moral development may

not have fully happened. That means that in Step Four, before jumping into doing a resentments list, it is often helpful to ask what are the morals or values of that part of the sponsee. The sponsee may need to re-lay a new moral foundation especially when his or her mother's morals are part of the problem. I tell people that a new moral foundation is "living in accordance with what their higher power wants for them." For a real young child, in Step Five, we may need to work on "misuse of base emotions" instead of "resentments" in order to communicate with that part of the sponsee.

Steps Six and Seven can be very interesting. Choices that the child has made could have been driving much of the acting out. For example, I found that as a child, I wanted that power that my abusers had over me. I thought that if I had the power, I would use it better than they did. The lust for sexual power drove many of my actions.

What having the "inner child" work the steps does is to help the adult take responsibility for the actions when "regressed" to a childlike state. Just like how a parent makes amends for what the child does, the adult makes the amends, not the "inner child." Steps Eight and Nine are for an adult, not a child or someone "regressed to a child state."

Step Ten allows for both the "adult" part and the "inner child" part to review how they are living each day. It includes the relationship between them. Step Eleven offers opportunities for a person to explore the vastness of a relationship with a higher power with all its complexity. When dealing with an "inner child." That relationship can be quite different from an adult-only relationship. Step Twelve includes standing up for those who need to do this work.

Our fellowship benefits from helping people work the steps who have had such trauma. I hope I have provided something in this article that can be of benefit.

E-mail Addresses

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

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