

THE LETTER TO NEWCOMERS (4)

Dear Newcomer

Welcome to S.A.A.

When we came to our first meeting many of us were having a variety of feelings. we were relieved to have found a place where our pain and despair might be understood. we were angry that we had to get help and couldn't manage this part of our lives. we felt lonely and were ashamed of our sexual history. we had secrets that we were reluctant to share. we were distrustful, guarded and frightened. we had been abused and we had abused others. we were sex addicts and needed help.

the programme of S.A.A. is patterned after the twelve-step program of alcoholics anonymous. here we learn a new way of living. we learn, at our own pace, to experience intimacy and sharing with others in a healthy way. we learn to trust; to express our feelings; to ask for our needs to be met; to say *no* when *no* is appropriate; and to stay around when all we want to do is run. here no one shames us for what we have done or are still doing. here we have a safe harbour within which to heal, and for that we are grateful.

the only requirement for membership in S.A.A is a desire to stop compulsive sexual behaviours. it is a programme of progress, not perfection. if you are willing to be honest and have a desire to have and maintain healthy relationships, then you are in the right place.

it is suggested that you attend at least six meetings before you decide whether the programme is for you. remember, however, there is no obligation on you to attend meetings if you do not want to. we encourage you to talk to others and exchange telephone numbers with those you relate to. we urge you also not to be offended if others do not want to give you their phone numbers.

we also suggest that you select a temporary sponsor to assist you in learning the basics. ask someone you relate to (to whom you are not sexually attracted) if they would be willing to be your temporary sponsor until you learn your way around. at a later date, after you have got to know us better, we suggest you choose a permanent sponsor.

we are happy that you are here, for it is the newcomer that keeps S.A.A. alive and well. You may not believe it at this moment, but we have as much to learn from you, as you have to learn from us. We encourage you to take it one day at a time, be gentle with yourself, and keep coming back.