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# Opening Serenity Prayer

*Secretary*: Please will you help me open the meeting with the Serenity Prayer, using the word 'God' as you do or do not understand it:

*All at will*: God, grant me **Serenity** to accept the things I cannot change, **Courage** to change the things I can and **Wisdom** to know the difference.

# Opening

*Secretary:* Welcome! This is the Saturday Swansea Meeting of Sex Addicts Anonymous.

Can we please ensure that all mobiles are turned off or to silent, Thank you.

S.A.A. is a fellowship of men and women who share our experience, strength and hope with each other so that we may stop our addictive sexual behaviour and help others to recover from sexual addiction and dependency.

This is not a place to meet sexual partners, nor is it group therapy. We try to listen respectfully to what others have to say and to share our own experience as it seems appropriate. We do not give advice.

Anonymity is a cornerstone of the Twelve Step Programme. We use only our first names. Whatever our status or position outside of this group is not an issue here. Our common bond is our desire to stop our addictive sexual behaviour and to live sexually healthy lives. Whatever you hear in this space, let it stay here when you leave.

We hope you will join in sharing the collective experience, strength and hope that is ours when we work the programme and trust our higher power to deliver the promises. If you are new or having a trying time, remember that others of us have been there too.

Keep coming back! It works!

# How It Works (volunteer)

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it - then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with sexual addiction - cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power - that One is God. May you find God now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked God's protection and care with complete abandon.

Our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

(a) That we were sexually addicted and could not manage our lives.
(b) That probably no human power could have relieved our addiction.
(c) That God could and would if God were sought.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a programme of recovery:

# The 12 Steps (Volunteer)

The Twelve Steps of Sex Addicts Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behaviour - that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God.

4. Made a fearless and searching moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked God to remove all our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to all such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practise these principles in all areas of our lives.

# The 12 Traditions (Volunteer)

*Volunteer reads only the tradition of the month eg September = 9th tradition*:

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon S.A.A. unity.

2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

3. The only requirement for membership in S.A.A. is a desire to stop addictive sexual behaviour.

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or S.A.A. as a whole.

5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the addict who still suffers.

6. Our fellowship ought never to endorse, finance, or lend its name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

7. Each group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

8. Sex Addicts Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.

9. S.A.A. as such, ought never be organised; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Sex Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the S.A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

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

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

# Silence

*Secretary:* Please can we have a few moments silence in which to reflect on why we are here and to think of the still suffering addict.

*Sufficient silence for reflection and thinking - usually about 60 seconds.*

*Secretary:* Thank you.

# Group Introductions

*Secretary*: We now come to Group Introductions in which we each introduce ourselves by our first name only, any short description that might be appropriate and if we wish, our bottom lines and how we are feeling at this moment.

*Starting with the secretary each member in turn introduces themselves and the rest of the group responds by greeting them by their first name. This style of introduction and group greeting is used every time a member speaks during the meeting, except when reading.*

# A letter to newcomers (if newcomers are present)

*Secretary*: Since this is *(name(s))* first meeting I will read the letter to newcomers:

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 Programme 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. At your first meeting we encourage you to talk to others and exchange telephone numbers with those you relate to. We also suggest that you select a temporary sponsor to assist you in learning the basics. The selection process is easy: all you do is 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 or co-sponsor.

In addition to attending meetings and talking with others we suggest you read our primary text *Sex Addicts Anonymous* and the S.A.A. pamphlets available via Intergroup. We also recommend *Hope and Recovery*, *Out of the Shadows* by Patrick Carnes, *Women, Sex and Addiction* by Charlotte Kasl, and *Alcoholics Anonymous (The Big Book)*.

We are happy that you are here, for it is the newcomer that keeps S.A.A. alive and well. We encourage you to take it ONE DAY AT A TIME, BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF, and KEEP COMING BACK.

# Group Business

*Secretary*: We now come to Group Business. If anyone has any business to bring before the group this is the time to do it.

*Any member may introduce themselves again and bring business notices or queries before the meeting. Simple decisions may be decided by consensus within Group Business but more complex or important decisions may be deferred by consensus to a Group Conscience Meeting, which will take place with at least one week's notice immediately after a normal meeting*

*Secretary*: If there is no further group business ...

# The Focus

*Secretary*: ... we come to the focus for this week's meeting.

*A focus can be pre-arranged with the secretary of the month, but by default the following types of focus are used each week of the month:*

*First week - Tools of the programme
See 'Tools of the programme' overleaf*

*Second week - Reading of the day
A reading from any suitable literature especially the Sex Addicts Anonymous green book or the daily reading from 'Answers in the Heart'. A volunteer can read an entire section or volunteers having access to the same book can take turns to read paragraphs.*

*Third week - Step reading of the month
The reading or part of the reading from the Sex Addicts Anonymous book for the step corresponding to the month, eg January Step 1, December Step 12*

*Fourth week - Presentation
A presentation on a related topic by a volunteer, usually as arranged earlier by or with the secretary of the month.*

*Fifth week - Any of the above or other recovery focus*

# Tools of the Programme (if selected as this week's focus)

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Abstinence Boundaries

Sponsorship Affirmations

Literature Meetings

Contracts Phone Lists

Gratitude Traditions

Journaling Service

Humour Prayer

Exercise Meditation

Honesty Slogans

The Twelve Steps

The Three Circles

*Secretary:* Members are invited to share on their use of these or any other tools of recovery.

# Introduction to First Step Presentation (for First Step Presentations only)

*Secretary: (name)*, you are about to share with us your First Step. We acknowledge and affirm your courage in taking this step. We want to clarify some things about this experience for each of us.

The primary purpose for you giving this formal first step presentation is to aid you in your programme of recovery. It need not be done to please the group, or gain status. There is no right or wrong way to give a First Step. Any effort you make is legitimate.

Here are some suggestions which others who have gone before have found helpful. We encourage you to be specific about your behaviours and to speak from your heart in order for you to be in touch with the pain and reality of your addiction. Try not to bury yourself in shame. Let us hear you, not your addict speaking.

The group has a responsibility to be loving, caring and accepting of you. The members will avoid judging you, giving advice to you or "taking care" of you.

If you wish you may request that no one interrupt you during your presentation. However, several members have affirmed that on reflection such interruptions have helped to guide them and to make the First Step experience more meaningful. Regardless of your choice in this matter, if you have not finished your presentation by then, I will let you know when 15 minutes of our meeting time remains. This will allow you a few minutes to complete your presentation and allow time for members to share what it was like being with you through this process.

If you do not finish you may have more time next week. Remember, we are here for you!

May God grant you serenity.

# General Sharing (except for First Step Presentations)

*Secretary*: We now come to General Sharing.

We encourage you to bring into the light of the meeting those behaviours and experiences which cause you shame; to deprive them of their power which is in their secrecy.

Please however, in your use of language, be sensitive to the safety of others. Please, avoid naming specific places, sexual acts, publications, broadcasts or services.

We do not have to check in if we don't want to.

We do not interrupt each other, and we do not ask questions or engage in discussion.

We each need to be aware of the time, so that every member of the group has time to share.

The time is now *(time)* and General Sharing will finish at *(time)*.

Please introduce yourself if you wish to share.

The meeting is open.

# Personal Responses (for First Step Presentations only)

*Secretary:* Thank you *(name)* for sharing your First Step.

We now come to Personal Responses.

Group members share about what it was like being with you as you presented your First Step. This is effectively a form of feedback, though they may want to identify with you by reference to their own experience.

The meeting is now open.

# The Seventh Tradition

*Secretary:* We now come to the Seventh Tradition.

May I remind everyone of the Seventh Tradition, that is, that every S.A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

# The Promises (volunteer)

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development we will be amazed before we are half way through.

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone we will see how our experiences can benefit others.

That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

Self-seeking will slip away.

Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

We will suddenly realise that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises?

*All at will:* We think not.

*Volunteer:* They are being fulfilled among us: sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialise if we work for them.

# Closing

*Secretary:*

*For First Step Presentations only:*

May I remind all members that a First Step can bring up a lot of feelings, both for the person giving their First Step and for other members. These feelings may come up during the course of the following few days.

*For all meetings:*

In closing:

The opinions expressed here today were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you like and leave the rest.

The things that you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind. Remember that anonymity is a core tradition on which the programme depends.

Whatever problems you have, there are those among us who have had them too. If you keep an open mind, you will find help. Let us talk to one another and reason things out but let us not gossip or criticise each other. Instead let the understanding, love and peace of the programme grow in each of us one day at a time.

Will you join me in the closing serenity prayer, using the word God as you understand it.

*All at will*: God, grant me **Serenity** to accept the things I cannot change, **Courage** to change the things I can and **Wisdom** to know the difference.

*All at will*: Keep coming back, it works if you work it - so work it, you're worth it!