

## Preamble

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may recover from sexual addiction. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop our compulsive sexual behavior. SAA is not affiliated with any sect, denomination or outside enterprise. Our group is self-supporting through its own contributions. SAA is not group therapy or sex therapy; rather, it is a program of recovery from sexual addiction based on our 12 steps and 12 traditions. SAA has no affiliation with Alcoholics Anonymous although our group is based on the principles of AA. Our primary purpose is to abstain from sexually compulsive behavior and to help others achieve abstinence.

## The Problem

Many of us find that our histories have several characteristics in common. Early on, as children and adolescents, we had come to feel disconnected - from siblings and peers, from parents and from ourselves. We felt inadequate, unworthy, alone and afraid. Our insides never matched what we saw on the outsides of others. We lost the ability to trust in others to fulfill our needs for nurturing and security. To compensate for our loss we started to develop a reliance upon sexual experience as a way of escaping the pain and the emptiness of our lives. Some of us feared being sexual at all - we weren't able to see that our sexuality was healthy and God-given.

Looking for love in all the wrong places, we became true addicts:- promiscuity, dependent relationships, abusive relationships, pornography, compulsive masturbation, anonymous sexual encounters, and much more besides. We got it through the eyes. We bought it, we sold it, we traded it, we gave it away. Addicted to the tease, to the forbidden, to the 'high', we abused others and we abused ourselves.

In a vicious downward spiral of despair we acted out to try to take away our pain, but this only increased our self-hatred which, sooner or later, we would try to ease again by acting out. The more we did it the more difficult it was for us to stop. We risked our relationships, our jobs, our health, our freedom, even our lives. We felt guilty, ashamed and in pain, and we were driven ever inwards, away from reality, away from love, lost inside ourselves.

Our addiction made true intimacy impossible. Lust killed love. We took from others to fill up what was lacking in ourselves, and, in desperate search of the Big Fix, we turned other human beings into objects of our gratification. We could never know true intimacy with another because we were addicted to the unreal, the chemistry, the intoxication and the intensity of the pursuit. We looked for the instant hit, the danger, the connection that had the magic, because it bypassed intimacy and true union with another, which we feared more than death. Conning ourselves time and again that the next one would save us, we were really losing our lives.