

God, grant me the serenity,

To accept the things I cannot change,

Courage to change the things I can,

And wisdom to know the difference.

The Problem and the Solution

Many of us found that we were powerless and unable to control our sexual behaviours. Our sexual activities had taken over as the dominant part of our lives. These compulsive activities were damaging our business, family and other intimate relationships and, above all, our spirituality. The only emotions we could feel were shame, despondency, anger or rage and the exhilarating high that engulfed us as we engaged in our sexual activities. For many reasons, we had reached a point of no return in our lives.

As children, many of us had learned to withdraw from the chaos and craziness around us, to trust no one but ourselves and to play great games of fantasy wherein we felt loved, needed and important. As we became older, these innocent fantasies of childhood turned into compulsive sexual activities and we found we were powerless to stop our insane behaviours. Our partners, whether known or anonymous, became sexual objects. The only difference among us was the scope of our acting-out and how fast it progressed.

Thus, we became sex addicts. We were unable to live in reality. We could not engage in healthy intimate relationships. Our time was occupied with the worship of our sexual pursuits. We were spiritually dead and many of us were in danger of losing our jobs, our families, our freedoms, or even our lives. Through the often-painful intervention of a Higher Power, we have been brought to this point of our journey. We now know that we do have serious problems. We are proving our courage just by being in this room. We are determined to do anything it takes to recover from our problem.

From those who have gone before us, we have learned what has to be done to overcome our illness. We must attend and support SAA meetings, share with and listen to others, continue to work the 12 Steps of SAA, gratefully serve the fellowship and reach out to the addict who still suffers. Then, each of us will know freedom and we will find ourselves truly alive in the serenity and joy of a spiritual recovery.

The 12 Steps

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 searching and fearless 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 Twelve Traditions

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.

A 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.

Although anonymity is a core tradition on which the programme depends, you should be aware that some people may decide after careful thought to report certain disclosures to the authorities.

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 at the meeting. 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.

Check-in and Feedback

We now come to Check-in and Feedback.

Check-in is an opportunity to talk about how we feel at this moment, and to say what is happening to us today or this week.

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

We can ask for feed-back, though we don't have to ask for or give feed-back.

Feed-back is not advice, criticism or analysis.

When we give feed-back we do not talk about ourselves.

Feedback is an attempt to mirror what we hear; to help the other person towards the feelings behind their words.

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, and to receive feedback if he or she wants it.

To Post into the Chat:

Members may donate as follows:

To the Banbury Group
contact Rory M via WhatsApp or Telegram

To the International Service Organisation of SAA
<https://saatalk.info/donate>

To the Telemeeting Intergroup, which funds this video conference
<https://saatalk.info/donate>

To the UK Intergroup, with which we are also registered
<https://saatalk.info/donate>

The Promises

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.

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

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

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 that 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.

They are being fulfilled amongst us, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly but they will always materialise if we work for them

God, grant me the serenity,
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.

Keep coming back, it works if you work it.
So work it, you're worth it.