

BACK TO BASICS for SAA

[Introduction to Workshop]

Overview and Step One

There was a period in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous when the program produced an estimated 75 percent recovery rate from alcoholism. So, how can we get reconnected with this miraculous piece of our glorious past? We need to take a trip back in time. As the announcer for the 1940's Lone Ranger radio program used to say, "Let us return now to those thrilling days of yesteryear."

It is the Fall of 1946. You have a drinking problem and you telephone Alcoholics Anonymous for help. A.A. responds by sending two people out to see you.

These ex-problem drinkers talk about their personal experiences with alcohol and how they found a way out. They tell you that, as part of their recovery, they try to be of service to others.

After listening to their stories, you agree to be hospitalized. They take you to a local sanitarium where you are withdrawn from alcohol. The process takes three days. During this period of time, you are visited by many of the members of the local A.A. group.

Upon your release, you are assigned a "sponsor" whose responsibility it is to accompany you to the Alcoholics Anonymous Beginner's Meetings. You take all Twelve Steps in one month. Your life changes – you never drink again.

Sounds incredibly simple doesn't it? Well, it was simple and it worked! A.A.'s remarkable recovery rate during the 1940's was due, in large part, to these four one-hour sessions. For many thousands of alcoholics, the Beginner's Meetings provided the foundation for a spiritual way of life which was essential for long term, contented sobriety.

So, let's imagine you're in a Midwest city. You are sitting at a table in the meeting room of a local church. You have copy of the book titled Alcoholics Anonymous with you, along with a pencil and paper. The first of the four one-hour sessions is about to begin.

This A.A. meeting is being hosted by one of the local groups. The leaders are "home group" members who have taken the Steps and have "sponsored" other alcoholics through them. It is now their turn to conduct the Beginner's Meetings.

The changes we've made to this 1946 A.A. meeting are to use the page numbers from a later edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, rather than the pages from the First Edition which was in use at the time and we kept the text in tact when we're quoting from the "Big Book." The format we're using will address sex addiction.

Welcome to the first of four one-hour S.A.A. meetings that will change your life! During the next several hours, you will learn how to recover from the affliction of sex addiction by taking the Twelve Steps as outlined in the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Sex Addicts Anonymous has found an answer to this insidious illness. As members of S.A.A., we are here today to share our solution with you – a spiritually based plan of action that will remove your sex addiction and provide you with a new way of living without destructive sexual behaviors.

Our names are _____ and _____ and we are members of Sex Addicts Anonymous. We lead these meetings to help insure our sobriety. We receive no payment for this service. Our reward is to watch people recover and to see them help others.

We will start this session by reading a statement from the book Alcoholics Anonymous:

“We are not an organization in the conventional sense of the word. There are no fees or dues whatsoever. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop acting out¹. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted.”

The book we are reading from is our textbook for recovery. We will be using this book extensively during these sessions.

What we just read, sums up the S.A.A. fellowships quite well. We are not a religion and we don't get involved in politics, psychology or medicine.

As the title of the book implies, we are an anonymous society. You can be assured we will protect your anonymity at this and any other meetings of Sex Addicts Anonymous. We ask that you do the same for us. And for everyone else who is here.

The “Big Book” of A.A. was first published in April 1939. It was written by several of the first 100 men to recover from alcoholism. Since then, it has been used by addicts all over the world as a program of recovery.

The original title of the book was 100 Men, because at the time it was being written, there were no women in the A.A. program. Then Florence R. started attending meetings in New York City. She stayed sober long enough to convince the men to change the name of the book – which they did. But, because the book was so close to publication, the authors didn't have time to change the contents. Please keep this in mind, as you read the book.

So that we can complete each session within an hour and still provide ample time for questions, we request that you write down anything that you do not understand or need clarified and save it until the end of the session. We will try to answer questions at that time.

The “Big Book” is the only book we will discuss during these meetings, except for an occasional reference to an A.A. newsletter article, or to some of the source material used to write the “Big Book.” If you cannot find something we say in the “Big Book,” consider it to be our opinion rather than fact.

We will do our best to keep our opinions out of these discussions. We are here to carry the message by using the A.A. program as written and practiced by the early members.

The Beginners' Meetings started in the early 1940's when A.A. started growing so rapidly it became impossible for the older members to individually take new prospects through the Steps. The sessions were formalized in a September 1944 pamphlet titled Alcoholics Anonymous – An Interpretation of our Twelve Steps, published by the Washington, D.C. Group. Since 1944, this pamphlet has been reprinted throughout the country. The preface to the pamphlet contains the following:

¹Substituted “acting out” for “drinking.”

“These meetings are held for the purpose of acquainting both the old and new members with the 12 steps upon which our program is based.”

“So that all twelve steps may be covered in a minimum amount of time, they are divided into four classifications, and one evening each week will be devoted to each of the four subdivisions.”

In 1945, the A.A. Grapevine, which is a newsletter published by the A.A. New York City headquarters, devoted three articles to the Beginners’ Meetings. These articles described the sessions in St. Louis, Missouri; Rochester, New York; and St. Paul, Minnesota.

Each group has developed its own guidelines for conducting the Beginners’ Meetings. However, all these groups have one thing in common. They provide a safe, structured environment in which newcomers learn the principles of S.A.A., take the Steps, and have spiritual experiences.

In order for the process to work, newcomers must be matched up with those S.A.A. members who are willing to “sponsor” them through the four one-hour sessions. In addition, the newcomers and the “sponsors” must make a commitment to attend all the meetings together.

So that newcomers and “sponsors” will better understand what is expected of them, we are going to explain some of the guidelines for these sessions:

For the Newcomers:

1. Your primary obligation is to attend all four sessions.
2. We will read the appropriate parts of the “Big Book” to you. Those of you who have brought “Big Books” and are able to follow along, please do so. We will announce each passage by page number and paragraph before we read it. If you are unable to read the book, please participate by listening. We will guide you through all Twelve steps as written by the “Big Book” authors. If you follow their directions, you too, will recover from sex addiction.
3. [Insert something about Three Circles]

For the “Sponsors”:

1. Your time commitment to the newcomer is during this workshop. After that, both you and the newcomer will be expected to “sponsor” other people through other sessions.
2. During the next month, call or visit the newcomer frequently to offer encouragement and moral support.
3. Attend the weekly Beginners’ Meetings with the newcomer.
4. Offer to help the newcomer with his or her Fourth Step. [ADD Three Circles]
5. Share your Guidance with the newcomer.
6. Answer any questions the newcomer may have about the S.A.A. program or the S.A.A. way of life.

Let’s get started. First, will those without a sponsor or whose sponsor is not present, please raise your hand, and keep them until a sponsor has been assigned to you. Will those members willing to sponsor these members begin choosing whom they will work with? These are the people who are

here to take the Twelve Steps of Sex Addicts Anonymous during these four one-hour sessions.

Thank you. Now that everyone has a “sponsor,” we can proceed.

Let’s start this session by turning to the Forward of the “Big Book” which is on Roman numeral page 13 (xiii). At the top of the page we find:

“We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other addicts² **PRECISELY HOW WE HAVE RECOVERED** is the main purpose of this book

So, the “Big Book” authors immediately tell us that the purpose of this book is to show us how to recover from addiction³. This is a revolutionary statement, because until this book was written, there was no hope for alcoholics, let alone sex addicts. Now, anyone who is willing to follow the directions they have provided, can recover.

The message of hope is expressed again at the bottom of page 17:

“The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer from addiction³.” (page 17, para. 3, lines 1-6)

At the bottom of page 25, paragraph 3, the authors explain that for us, there is no middle ground. We are either going to die from sex addiction or else find a spiritual solution:

“If you are as seriously addicted as we are, we believe there is no middle-of-the-road solution. We are in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best as we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help.”

In the first paragraph on page 44, they describe the addict⁴ and then tell us what it is going to take to recover. Starting with line four, they write:

“If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when acting out⁵, you have little control...you are probably a sex addict.⁶ If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.”

To make sure everyone understands what we just read, we are going to read the last line again:

“...If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness **ONLY** a spiritual experience will conquer.”

²Substituted “addicts” for “alcoholics”

³Substituted “addiction” for “alcoholism”

⁴Substituted “addict” for “alcoholic”

⁵ Substituted “acting out” for “drinking”

⁶Substituted “a sex addict” for “alcoholic”

⁷Substituted “addicted” for “alcoholic”

Now we know what we have to do in order to recover from sex addiction. We must undergo a life changing, spiritual transformation.

We realize this is not the answer many of you expected to find in Sex Addicts Anonymous. But, please keep in mind that sex addiction is a fatal illness. Prior to S.A.A., most sex addicts either died from disease, homicide, suicide or were locked up in prisons.

In the middle of page 44, paragraph 2, the authors once again tell us our options:

“To one who feels he is an atheist or agnostic such an experience seems impossible, but to continue as he is means disaster, especially if he is a sex addict⁷ of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to an addictive⁸ death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.”

Not only is a spiritual experience possible, it is a guarantee, provided you keep an open mind and take the Steps as described in the “Big Book.”

In the next paragraph, paragraph 3, on page 44, they tell us that no matter what our present beliefs, there is hope for us:

“But it isn’t so difficult. About half our original fellowship were exactly that type. At first some of us tried to avoid the issue, hoping against all hope we were not true addicts⁹. But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life — or else. Perhaps it is going to be that way with you. But cheer up, something like half of us thought we were atheists or agnostics. Our experience shows that you need not be disconcerted.”

We find it amazing that a newcomer can start the S.A.A. program without any specific beliefs or, for that matter, without any beliefs whatsoever. All a person needs is the open-mindedness and the willingness to believe that **we believe** this program works.

And let us assure you, we do believe. The Twelve Steps have changed our lives and the lives of thousands of other sex addicts. This program will change your life too, if you honestly want to recover from this deadly affliction.

Let’s see what we can learn about this spiritual solution. In the first paragraph on page 45, the “Big Book” authors tell us:

“Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a *Power greater than ourselves*. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power?”

“Well, that’s exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem. That means we have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God.”

⁷alcoholic replaced with “sex addict”

⁸Substituted “addictive” for “alcoholic”

⁹ “alcoholics” replaced with “addicts”

In the second paragraph on page 46, the authors ask us to develop our own concept of God. In other words, they want us to find a God of our own understanding:

“Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another’s conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps. We found that God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all...” (page 46, para. 2, lines 1-13)

They inform us that we are going to take some actions which will lead us to our Creator, who will guide us in the Realm of the Spirit. Our personalities will change from self-centered to God-centered; our lives will change from the Material to the Spiritual.

As we said earlier, Sex Addicts Anonymous¹⁰ is not a religious program. We’re free to call this Power anything we wish, as long as it is a Power greater than ourselves. The “Big Book” authors use many different names for this Power including Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, Spirit of the Universe, Creator, and the Great Reality, among others. Quite a few times they call this Power, God, but they use the word God merely for convenience rather than for any religious purpose. Please refer to this Power by any name you believe in or feel comfortable with.

So, in order to recover from sex addiction, we have to find a Power greater than ourselves. But where are we going to find this Power? The authors provide us with the answer to that question in the second and third paragraphs on page 55:

“Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself”

“We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found.”

These are dramatic and for some of us revolutionary concepts. Let us summarize them for you. First, the authors of the “Big Book” tell us they have found a way to free us from the bondage of sex addiction. Next, they describe the solution as a Power greater than ourselves. Finally, they tell us where to find this Power – right inside each and every one of us.

Now we know **WHERE** to find this Power. Much of the rest of the “Big Book” is devoted to the question of **HOW** to find this Power.

Basically, we find the Spirit of the Universe by taking the Twelve Steps of Sex Addicts Anonymous. These Steps are found on pages 59 and 60. Please follow along with us as we read the Steps of

¹⁰Substituted “Sex Addicts Anonymous” for “Alcoholics Anonymous”

S.A.A. to you. In addition, we're going to give you the page numbers where each Step is located in the book.

Step 1

We admitted we were powerless over sex addiction – that our lives had become unmanageable.

This step is described on Roman numeral pages 23–30 (xxiii – xxx), and on pages 1–43. [The directions for taking Step One are on page 30, para. 2, lines 1-3.]

Step 2

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

This step is described on pages 44–60. [The directions for taking Step Two are on page 47, para. 2, lines 1–3.]

Step 3

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

This step is described on pages 60 – 63. [The directions for taking Step Three are on page 63, para. 2, lines 1-8.]

Step 4

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

This step is described on pages 63-71. [The directions for taking Step Four are on page 64, para. 1, lines 1-9; para. 2, lines 1-6.]

Step 5

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

This step is described on pages 72-75. [The directions for taking Step Five are on page 75, para. 1, lines 1-4; para. 2, lines 1-2.]

Step 6

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

This step is described on pages 75-76. [The directions for taking Step Six are on page 76, para. 1, lines 3-5.]

Step 7

Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

This step is described on page 76. [The directions for taking Step Seven are on page 76, para. 2, lines 1-7.]

Step 8

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

This step is described on page 76. [The directions for taking Step Eight are on page 76, para. 3, lines 3-5.]

Step 9

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

This step is described on pages 76-84. [The directions for taking Step Nine are on page 76, para. 3, lines 6-11.]

Step 10

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

This step is described on pages 84-85. [The directions for Step Ten are on page 84, para. 2, lines 1-14 and page 86, para. 1, lines 1-14.]

Step 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.

This step is described on pages 85-88. [The directions for taking Step Eleven are on page 86, para. 2, lines 1-5; para. 3, lines 1-6.]

Step 12

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

This step is described on pages 89-103 and pages 569-570. [The directions for taking Step Twelve are on page 89, para. 1, lines 1-7.]

(Instructions on how to carry our message of recovery to others are found throughout pages 89-103).

Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over sex addiction – that our lives had become unmanageable.

Surrender is essential in order to recover from sex addiction. The “Big Book” authors devote 51 pages of the book to the first part of the surrender process which is to admit we have a problem.

The authors begin by describing the physical and mental symptoms of alcoholism which can also work for sex addiction. Later they ask us to acknowledge that we are sex addicts.¹¹ Before we can do this, we need to know what sex addiction is. Although the following will be describing alcoholism, please translate this to sex addiction in your own way.

Much of “The Doctor’s Opinion” is based on two letters written by Dr. William D. Silkworth, a physician at Towns Hospital in New York City. In the late 1930’s, very little was known about alcoholism, but much of what Dr. Silkworth wrote then is still relevant today.

On Roman numeral page 23 (xxiii), paragraph one, Dr. Silkworth describes how Bill W., one of the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, recovered from alcoholism. Bill had once been a well respected Wall Street stock analyst, but he had lost everything due to his drinking:

“In late 1934 I attended a patient who, though he had been a competent businessman of good earning capacity, was an alcoholic of a type I had come to regard as hopeless.

In the course of his third treatment he acquired certain ideas concerning a possible means of recovery. As part of his rehabilitation he commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing upon them that they must do likewise with still others. This has become the basis of a rapidly growing fellowship of these men and their families. This man and over one hundred others appear to have recovered.

I personally know scores of cases who were of the type with whom other methods had failed completely.”

¹¹Substituted “sex addicts” for “alcoholics”

For several years prior to 1934, Dr. Silkworth had been treating alcoholics at Towns Hospital with very little success. Then, during his third trip to the hospital, Bill discovered the spiritual solution to alcoholism which he helped develop into the A.A. program.

One of the things Bill learned while in Towns Hospital was that he had to work with other alcoholics in order to stay sober himself. He also learned that alcoholism was a physical and a mental illness which only a spiritual experience would conquer.

On Roman numeral page 24 (xxiv), paragraph one, the authors confirm that Dr. Silkworth was well aware of the physical aspects of alcoholism:

“The physician who, at our request, gave us this letter, has been kind enough to enlarge upon his views in another statement which follows. In this statement he confirms what we who have suffered alcoholic torture must believe—that the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind. It did not satisfy us to be told that we could not control our drinking just because we were maladjusted to life, that we were in full flight from reality, or were outright mental defectives. These things were true to some extent, in fact, to a considerable extent with some of us. But we are sure that our bodies were sickened as well. In our belief, any picture of the alcoholic which leaves out this physical factor is incomplete.”

Let’s look at this abnormal physical reaction to alcohol. We’ll continue using the word “alcohol” and its variants for some sections because using sex addiction in its place doesn’t translate out very well. So bear with us. Alcohol is a poison. The normal reaction to alcohol is to have one or two drinks and stop. But, our reaction is much different. We have one or two drinks just to get started.

Toward the bottom of Roman numeral page 28 (xxxviii), paragraph five, Dr. Silkworth tells us that, because of this abnormal reaction, we must refrain from drinking:

“All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, ...differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated. The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence.”

Abstinence might work if alcoholism was only a physical illness, but Dr. Silkworth found that alcoholism has a mental component as well. In addition to an abnormal physical reaction, we have a mental obsession. Our minds tell us we are O.K., even as sex addiction is bringing us closer and closer to death. No matter how much we may want to stop, sooner or later we will return to destructive sexual behaviors.

Dr. Silkworth describes this mental obsession in his letter on Roman numeral page 26 (xxvi), paragraph four. Please keep in mind Dr. Silkworth is talking about alcoholics, when he writes at the bottom of the page:

“Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks—drinks which they see others taking with impunity.”

Starting with line four on page 30, the authors describe how this mental obsession kills so many of us:

“Therefore, it is not surprising that our drinking careers have been characterized by countless vain attempts to prove we could drink like other people. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of very abnormal drinker. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death.”

They further emphasize the mental obsession on page 34, paragraph two, by stating that, no matter how strong our willpower or our conviction, we cannot stop drinking, or sexually acting out, on our own:

“For those who are unable to drink moderately the question is how to stop altogether. We are assuming, of course, that the reader desires to stop. Whether such a person can quit upon a nonspiritual basis depends upon the extent to which he has lost the power to choose whether he will drink or not. Many of us felt that we had plenty of character. There was a tremendous urge to cease forever. Yet we found it impossible. This is the baffling feature of alcoholism as we know it—this utter inability to leave it alone, no matter how great the necessity or the wish.”

You see, if our minds didn't lie to us and tell us that it's O.K. to act out on our bottom line behaviors, we would never trigger the physical craving for more and more destructive sexual behaviors. So, we have an abnormal reaction of the body and an obsession of the mind which dooms us perhaps to death as a result of our sex addiction. Back on Roman numeral page 27 (xxvii), line 3-9, Dr. Silkworth tells us our only hope is a life changing conversion experience. Starting with line three, he writes:

“...After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope for his recovery.”

So, a prominent doctor in the field of alcoholism tells us that the medical community can't help us. I wonder what the medical community's views are on sex addiction? Our only hope is a spiritual awakening.

Now, let's move on to “Bill's Story.” In this chapter we learn more about the physical and mental aspects of alcoholism, and also more about the spiritual solution. As we mentioned earlier, Bill is the New York stock analyst who is one of A.A.'s co-founders.

Some people have difficulty with Bill's story because he was such a low-bottom, hopeless alcoholic. Here, as elsewhere in the book, we ask that you look for similarities rather than differences. See where you can identify with Bill as he continues to use alcohol long after it has become a problem.

In the first seven pages, Bill describes the progressive nature of his drinking. In a few short years he loses everything. He becomes an unemployed, hopeless drunk.

On Page 8, paragraph one, Bill has a moment of clarity. He realizes alcohol is his master. He is licked—defeated:

“No words can tell of the loneliness and despair I found in that bitter morass of self-pity. Quicksand stretched around me in all directions. I had met my match. I had been overwhelmed. Alcohol was my master.”

But Bill can't stop drinking on this admission alone. In late November 1934, he is visited by an old high school chum, Ebby T. Bill is drunk. Ebby has been sober for several months. When Bill asks Ebby how he stopped drinking, Ebby tells him, "I've got religion." Bill is shocked but he lets Ebby continue because, as he writes, "my gin would last longer than his preaching."

Ebby explains to Bill that he has found a group of people who rely upon a Power greater than themselves and who live based on the Guidance they receive from this Power. In 1934, this organization was called the Oxford Group.

The Oxford Group is a life changing fellowship which utilizes Four Spiritual Activities. These are:

1. Surrender—our First, Second and Third Steps.
2. Sharing and Witnessing—our Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Twelfth Steps.
3. Restitution—our Eighth and Ninth Steps.
4. Quiet Time and Guidance—our Tenth and Eleventh Steps.

Ebby provides Bill with the Oxford Group solution. For the first time, Bill learns he can change his life by turning his will over to a God of his own understanding.

Soon after Ebby's visit, Bill checks into Towns Hospital. There, under the direction of Dr. Silkworth, Bill is physically withdrawn from alcohol for the third time that year. While in the hospital, Bill applies the Oxford Group Four Spiritual Activities.

In the second paragraph on page 13, Bill makes a complete Surrender:

"There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as he would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction."

Then he Shares his character liabilities with Ebby, starting on line 5:

"...I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new found Friend take them away, root and branch..."

"My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies."

When Bill wrote, "I ruthlessly faced my sins..." he used the Oxford Group definition for the word "sin." According to the Oxford Group, sin is anything that separates us from God or from one another. Selfishness is the cause. We free ourselves from sin by following God's will rather than self-will.

Starting with the next sentence in the third paragraph, Bill agrees to make Restitution. This is an important part of moving from the problem of relying on self-will toward the solution of relying upon God's will:

"...We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment. I expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals, admitting my wrong. Never was I to be critical of them. I was to right all such matters, to the utmost of my ability."

In the next paragraph, Bill practices "Quiet Time" and Guidance. These activities are essential for establishing a two-way communication with the Spirit of the Universe:

"I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would

become uncommon sense. I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me.”

At the bottom of page 14, Ebby explains the necessity of Witnessing to others. Starting with line two in the last paragraph, Bill writes:

“...Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me. Faith without works was dead, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that.”

Bill takes the actions prescribed by the Oxford Group and has a sudden conversion experience. He has the “entire psychic change” that Dr. Silkworth talks about in “The Doctor’s Opinion.” In the second paragraph on page 14, Bill describes his spiritual awakening:

“These were revolutionary and drastic proposals, but the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric. There was a sense of victory, followed by such a peace and serenity as I had never known. There was utter confidence. I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through. God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound.”

Bill’s life changed. He hasn’t had a drink since.

There is additional material within these 51 pages of the “Big Book” that further explains the physical and mental aspects of alcoholism as well as our sex addiction and how our lives have become unmanageable as the result of our acting out. If you need more proof, please read on. All we’ve done is provide you with some of the highlights. However, we hope we’ve shown you enough for you to proceed.

Now, it’s time for each of us to start our personal journey toward that spiritual experience which will change our lives. Let’s see who is ready to take the First Step?

Step 1

We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior — that our lives had become unmanageable.

The “Big Book” authors tell us exactly what we have to do. In the middle of page 30, paragraph two, they write:

“We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.”

In order to smash the delusion that we’re not sex addicts, we are going to ask each of you to answer a simple question, “Are you ready to concede to your innermost self you are powerless over your sexual addiction?” In other words, “Are you a sex addict?” All that is required is a yes or no answer.

If you’re not convinced you are a sex addict or that your life is unmanageable, please let us know.

Your “sponsor” or spiritual advisor is willing to spend time with you today to discuss your reservations. We want to give you every opportunity to comprehend the devastating consequences of this terrible affliction.

Maybe you’re not a sex addict. Maybe you’re here by mistake. We just want you to know we’d rather be inside the fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous by mistake, than outside the fellowship, acting out and dying by mistake. It’s something to think about.

O.K., for those who are ready, let’s proceed. Can we please stand? This is the First Step question:

Do you concede to your innermost self you are a sex addict?

Please answer, one at a time, yes or no.

[Have each newcomer answer the question.]

Thank you. Please be seated.

Those of you who have answered yes to this question have completed Step One.

In the past hour, we have covered 51 pages of the “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous and taken the First Step. This is a remarkable achievement. Congratulations.

In the next hour we’ll discuss Steps Two, Three and Four. We will take the Second and Third Steps during the meeting and we will provide you with guidelines on how to take the Fourth Step. You will complete your Fourth Step inventory and share it with you “sponsor” or spiritual advisor between the second and the third sessions.

Are there any questions?