

Reaching For Recovery Thursday 10 pm EST Readings

- [The Opening](#) or [Our Addiction](#)
- [How It Works](#) or [Our Program](#)
- [The Twelve Steps](#)
- [Abstinence Statement](#) or [Defining Abstinence](#)
- [The Twelve Traditions](#)
- [The Promises: Ottawa, Unity Prayer, Ninth Step](#)

The Opening

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

Membership is open to all who share a desire to stop compulsive sexual behavior and are willing to try this simple program.

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a spiritual program based on the principles and traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, but we are not affiliated with AA or any other organization or agency. We are not a religious organization or aligned with any sect or denomination.

We do not support, endorse, or oppose outside causes or issues.

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 experience as it seems appropriate. We do not give advice. While we all strive for sexual sobriety, its achievement is not a requirement for attendance or participation.

Anonymity is the cornerstone of the Twelve Step program. 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 compulsive sexual behaviors and to live sexually healthy lives. Anonymity and confidentiality are essential to this being a safe place for all of us. Whoever you see here, whatever you hear here, let it stay here when you leave here. (Here, here)

We hope you join in sharing the collective experience, strength and hope that is ours when we work the program and trust our Higher Power to deliver the promises.

Our Addiction (SAA Green Book, page 3)

Before coming to Sex Addicts Anonymous, many of us never knew that our problem had a name. All we knew was that we couldn't control our sexual behavior. For us, sex was a consuming way of life. Although the details of our stories were different, our problem was the same. We were addicted to sexual behaviors that we returned to over and over, despite the consequences.

Sex addiction is a disease affecting the mind, body, and spirit. It is progressive, with the behavior and its consequences usually becoming more severe over time. We experience it as compulsion, which is an urge that is stronger than our will to resist, and as obsession, which is a mental preoccupation with sexual behavior and fantasies. In SAA, we have come to call our addictive sexual behavior *acting out*.

How It Works

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program. They cannot develop a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. There are those, too, who suffer from serious emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

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.

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

[Pause here and continue reading after the 12 Steps are read.]

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us had been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

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

1. That we were sexually addicted and could not manage our lives.
2. That probably no human being could have relieved our addiction.
3. That God could and would if God were sought.

Our Program (SAA Green Book, page 20)

Attending SAA meetings starts us on a new way of life. But while the SAA fellowship supports our recovery, the actual work of recovery is described in the Twelve Steps. Meetings are forums for learning how to integrate the steps into our lives. Working the Twelve Steps leads to a spiritual transformation that results in sustainable relief from our addiction.

When we start attending meetings of Sex Addicts Anonymous, many of us are surprised to meet people who are enjoying life and experiencing freedom from the painful, compulsive behaviors that had brought them to SAA. Listening to other members share about their recovery, we gradually realize that in order to make the same kind of progress, we need to be willing to do whatever it takes to get sexually abstinent, and to stay abstinent. We have learned from hard experience that we cannot achieve and maintain abstinence if we aren't willing to change our way of life. But if we can honestly face our problems, and are willing to change, the Twelve

Steps of SAA will lead to an awakening that allows us to live a new way of life according to spiritual principles. Taking these steps allows fundamental change to occur in our lives. They are the foundation of our recovery.

The Twelve Steps of Sex Addicts Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior — 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 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 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 the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

Abstinence Statement

Our primary purpose is to abstain from sexually compulsive behavior, and help others to achieve abstinence. In line with this purpose, we feel that a brief statement regarding the meaning of abstinence is in order.

First, we define abstinence in terms of behavior rather than mental states. We do not focus our efforts upon abstaining from mental "lust," but from compulsive behavior. Just as AA focuses on the need to stop the behavior of drinking, and as OA focuses on compulsive eating as the point of abstinence, so SAA focuses on compulsive sexual acting out. The lust of the mind may take years to drain away as one works the twelve steps of recovery; abstinence from the destructive and addictive behaviors, however, can begin today, and is the basic foundation upon which all subsequent personal growth depends. "Progress rather than perfection" is the atmosphere for growth that we seek to promote.

Secondly, abstinence will be different for each member of SAA, depending upon what behaviors are compulsive and lead to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. Some addicts can engage in sexual behaviors from which other addicts find they must abstain; in SAA, we leave the choice up to the individual.

Finally, abstinence does not imply the complete elimination of sexuality from the addict's life, whether married, partnered or single; rather, it lays the foundation for learning a new approach

to the experience of sex and relationships which is non-compulsive and non-destructive. Such an approach is possible to all who earnestly desire it.

Defining Abstinence (SAA Green Book, pages 14-15)

Our goal when entering the SAA Program is abstinence from one or more specific sexual behaviors. But unlike programs for recovering alcoholics or drug addicts, Sex Addicts Anonymous does not have a universal definition of abstinence.

Most of us have no desire to stop being sexual altogether. It is not sex in and of itself that causes us problems, but the addiction to certain sexual behaviors. In SAA we will be better able to determine what behavior is addictive and what is healthy. However, the fellowship does not dictate to its members what is and isn't addictive sexual behavior. Instead we have found that it is necessary for each member to define his or her own abstinence.

The Twelve Traditions of Sex Addicts Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SAA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers.
6. An SAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. SAA should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SAA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. SAA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SAA 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.

The Promises

- [The Ottawa Promises](#)
- [The Unity Prayer](#)
- [The AA Ninth Step Promises](#)

The Ottawa Promises

Through a renewed Relationship with God/our Higher Power, the healing force of recovery will take hold in our hearts. By giving ourselves over to God/our Higher Power and working our program, our lives will become manageable and we will be restored to sanity. We will receive

the inner strength and support needed to face our anxieties and fears, and to deal with the painful feelings that feed our addiction.

Relations with Others will improve as we learn to respect our boundaries and allow others freedom to be themselves. Reaching out in trust and connecting with others will come easier, dispelling our sense of isolation and loneliness. Degrading fantasies and obsessive sexual thinking will diminish.

Relating to ourselves, self-absorption will give way to self-discovery; secrecy to honesty; feelings of unworthiness to dignity; and shame to grace. A restored integrity will guide our behavior. We will feel more alive and regain a sense of happiness. We will hear ourselves laugh again and rediscover play. We will embrace change and will grow.

A Spiritual Awakening will free us from the tyranny of our addiction. An awareness of being guided by a Higher Power and supported by caring friends will sustain us. Regret for the past and worry for the future will give way to living for today. We will open ourselves to the amazing possibilities of a life worth living, our life.

Are these extravagant promises?

WE THINK NOT!

We have seen them fulfilled. They are ours, if we want them and work for them.

The Unity Prayer

I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness. No longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for a power and strength greater than ours; and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.

The AA Ninth Step 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. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we see how our experience 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 realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises?

WE THINK NOT!

They are being fulfilled among us, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.