

Readings for the Noon Eastern Talkin' 'Bout Recovery Telemeeting

The Opening

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other so they may overcome their sexual addiction and help others recover from sexual addiction and dependency.

Membership is open to all who share a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior. There is no other requirement.

Our common goals are to become sexually healthy and to help other sex addicts achieve freedom from compulsive sexual behavior.

SAA is supported through voluntary contributions from members.

We are not affiliated with any other twelve-step programs, nor are we a part of any other organization. We do not support, endorse, or oppose outside causes or issues.

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a spiritual program based on the principles and traditions of Alcoholic Anonymous. We are grateful to A.A. for this gift, which makes our recovery possible.

How it Works (part 1)

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:

The 12 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.

How it Works (part 2)

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has 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 power could have relieved our addiction.
- (3) That God could and would if God were sought.

Abstinence Statement

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.

Since different addicts suffer from different behaviors, and since our sexuality is experienced in so many different ways, it is necessary that SAA members define for themselves, with the help of their sponsors or others in recovery, which of their sexual behaviors they consider to be "acting out".

This can be a difficult challenge. If we are too lenient with ourselves, we might not get sober. If we are too strict, we might restrict ourselves from healthy behaviors that we have no need to give up, and an inability to meet our high standards could set us up for relapse. We need the help of other recovering sex addicts and the reliance on a Power greater than ourselves, to find the right balance between these two extremes.

Our program acknowledges each individual's dignity and right to choose his or her own concept of healthy sexuality. We have learned that our ideas of what is healthy and what is addictive evolve with experience. In time, we are able to define our individual abstinence with honesty, fairness and gentleness. This process is a valuable exercise in our recovery. It requires us to carefully examine all of our sexual behaviors, decide which ones are healthy or addictive, and note those cases where we're not sure. It is a way of taking stock of our sexuality that teaches us a lot about ourselves and our behavior.

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.