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SETTING BOTTOM-LINES

A Pamphlet with Worksheets

Sex and Love Addicts
Anonymous



*This pamphlet is S.L.A.A.
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Bottom-line behaviors are “self-defined activities which we refrain from in order to experience our physical, mental, emotional, sexual, and spiritual wholeness.” (*Welcome* pamphlet ©1997.)

Bottom-lines are the boundaries between our addictive lives and “a new life of fulfillment, richness and mystery [that] surely awaits [us] as [we] move into sobriety....” (*Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous* ©1986, Page 159.)

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over sex and love addiction—that our lives had become unmanageable. (Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A., ©1985)

Recovery begins with admitting that following our addictive path is making our lives unmanageable and we are powerless to stop. Each person in S.L.A.A. acts out differently. Therefore, our bottom-lines are self-defined. It is up to each one of us, with the help of our Higher Power, our sponsor and others to learn to recognize our addictive patterns. We can set bottom-lines, which we refrain from in order to stay sober.

This pamphlet offers a plan to set bottom-lines, which help break the destructive cycle of sex and love addiction. It is an aid to S.L.A.A. newcomers in identifying their bottom-lines. And a guide to those wishing to adjust their existing bottom-lines. We strongly suggest that you get the help of your sponsor or another trusted S.L.A.A. member when using this pamphlet and its worksheets.

This pamphlet is divided into five separate sections:

- I. Destructive Behaviors
- II. Addictive Patterns
- III. Accessory Behaviors
- IV. Bottom-line Behaviors
- V. Healthy Behaviors

Each section includes examples as well as worksheets for your personal use.



I. Destructive Behaviors

Many of us came to S.L.A.A. after one or more bouts with our destructive sexual or romantic behaviors. Perhaps we had an affair. Perhaps we got arrested for a sex offense. Perhaps we simply saw that our behavior was creating problems for ourselves and others. Whatever brought us to S.L.A.A., we can experience sobriety by defining our bottom-lines and abstaining from them.

One way to begin determining our bottom-lines in S.L.A.A. is to list our destructive behaviors, which typically involve sex, love, romance, or unhealthy avoidance of these. Identifying the addictive activities we engage in helps us determine what not to do if we want to become sober in S.L.A.A.

Addictive, destructive behaviors render us unable to maintain self-control and incapable of guessing what our actions will be. Indulging in such a temptation, to use an A.A. analogy, is our “first drink.” Following are some brief examples.

Behavior:

- Having an affair
- Participating in romantic intrigue
- Not leaving an abusive relationship
- Voyeurism
- Compulsive avoidance of social/sexual activity
- Paying for sex
- Anonymous sex
- Spending romantic time with someone who is in love with somebody else

On the next page are examples of consequences for previously noted behaviors. This is not a complete list. You may have other consequences that cause your life to be unmanageable.



Behavior	Consequences (Unmanageability)
Having an affair	Harming Someone, Hurting Relationships, Spiritually Harmful
Participating in romantic intrigue	Hurting Relationships, Threatening Job, Lowers Self-Esteem, Psychologically Damaging, Spiritually Harmful
Not leaving an abusive relationship	Life/Health Threatening, Lowers Self-Esteem, Spiritually Harmful
Voyeurism	Harming Someone, Legal Problems
Compulsive avoidance of social/sexual activity	Hurting Relationships, Threatening Job, Spiritually Harmful
Paying for sex	Financially Damaging, Legal Problems
Anonymous sex	Life/Health Threatening, Hurting Relationships, Lowers Self-Esteem, Spiritually Harmful, Legal Problems
Spending romantic time with someone who is in love with somebody else	Hurting Relationships, Lowers Self-Esteem, Psychologically Damaging, Spiritually Harmful

Destructive Behaviors Worksheet

Instructions

In the first box (*Destructive Behaviors*) list your destructive behaviors. In other words, what specifically have you done that has made your life unmanageable and brought you to S.L.A.A.? What issues render you unable to maintain self-control? Include sexual, emotional, and avoidant behaviors that you are powerless to stop. In the second box (*Unmanageability Check List*), match the numbers of your destructive behaviors and check the risks that apply. The “Other” column is for risks you may recognize that are not listed in the other columns.



Destructive Behaviors

These are the behaviors that I feel powerless over -- or I know need to be stopped. These behaviors harm me and/or others. To some degree they make my life unmanageable, and they have consequences.

Write down your destructive behaviors. Mark each consequence that applies.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

UNMANAGEABILITY CHECK LIST

Check (✓) the risks that apply

Destructive Behaviors	Harming Someone	Life/Health Threatening	Hurting Relationships	Financially Damaging	Threatening Job	Lower Self-Esteem	Psychologically Damaging	Spiritually Harmful	Legal Problems	Other:
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										



II. Addictive Patterns

As you review your list of destructive behaviors, keep an eye out for similarities. You may begin to see certain patterns of acting out emerging. Maybe it's the type of activity you pursue. Perhaps it's the type of person you pursue. Possibly it's the way that you create or alter your schedule to make time to act out.

For example, your list may reveal that you repeatedly become involved with married people, severe workaholics and those who live far away. Therefore *you might* conclude that one of your addictive patterns is pursuing unavailable people.

It is important to understand what your part is in the pattern. It may be tempting to say, "I can't stop the affair because they keep calling me." But that is blaming others for your behavior. What are you doing to stay in these miserable places? How did you get there? How are you setting yourself up? Be willing to be honest with yourself.

Destructive Behaviors
From your list above, jot down some significant destructive behaviors.



Your personal pattern may not be immediately clear to you. Sometimes it takes awhile to know yourself – and to become honest about your actions. It may be helpful to ask others you trust in S.L.A.A. about their addictive patterns, or to work closely with a sponsor.

Identifying addictive patterns is very important to staying sober. Not only because it helps you stop from relapsing into specific destructive behaviors – it also helps you avoid “new ways” of acting out – such as switching from beer to wine for an alcoholic.

Addictive Patterns
See if you can identify “patterns” in these behaviors.

NOTES:



III. Accessory Behaviors (warning signs)

You may notice other behaviors that are not destructive by themselves, but serve your addiction. It is vital to be aware of the obsessions, rituals, and triggers that have led to acting out. Look for behaviors that you are not sure belong on your bottom-lines or that have minor consequences. These are warning signs that you are in danger of acting out.

“...we found that whenever we engaged in these accessory behaviors, regardless of how innocent or unaware we were of doing so, we had unwittingly set up the potential for sexual and emotional intrigue -- just what we were trying so desperately to avoid!” (*Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous* ©1986, Page 108.)

Here are some examples of accessory behaviors:

1. Cruising for sex
2. Driving in certain neighborhoods
3. Going for a walk at night in dark clothing
4. Going places where you will run into a former unavailable partner
5. Exchanging phone numbers
6. Screening phone calls
7. Maintaining multiple phone numbers
8. Having conversations with an erotic subtext
9. Contacting former sex partners
10. Carrying a condom
11. Wearing cologne or perfume
12. Dressing provocatively
13. Keeping a packed overnight bag
14. Having large amounts of cash in your pocket
15. Drinking alcohol or using drugs
16. Ignoring/overlooking abusive behavior
17. Looking up specific search words on the Internet
18. Reading romance novels
19. Seeing romantic movies
20. Reading personal ads
21. Routinely rejecting social invitations
22. Obsessing/fantasizing about unavailable people



Accessory Behaviors Worksheet

Instructions

Below, list your accessory behaviors. If you're not sure whether a certain activity is an accessory behavior, list it anyway. Discuss it later with your sponsor or another trusted S.L.A.A. member.

Accessory Behaviors (warning signs)

Accessory behaviors include the strategies I have used to obtain partners or materials for acting out. They are warning signs, obsessions and rituals that may precede an episode of acting out. (See page 108 of the S.L.A.A. Basic Text.)

Write down your accessory behaviors.

NOTES:



IV. Bottom-Line Behaviors

Bottom-line behaviors are “generally, self-defined activities which we refrain from in order to experience our physical, mental, emotional, sexual, and spiritual wholeness.” (*Welcome* pamphlet ©1997.)

A “bottom-line” is derived from a pattern -- not necessarily any one specific activity. Additionally, a bottom-line needs to be clear enough so that it is obvious when it is crossed. If you’re struggling with finding a pattern, set a specific bottom-line anyway. It will get you started.

For example, here are some possible bottom-lines:

- Having sex with someone who is married
- Pursuing a new relationship before ending an existing one
- Having sex outside a committed, monogamous relationship
- Having sex with a prostitute
- Following someone home uninvited
- Doing anything that could reasonably get me arrested
- Lying to my spouse
- Masturbating to pornography
- Having anonymous sex
- Going to strip clubs and peepshows
- Having sex on the first date
- Having unprotected sex
- Having sex when I don’t want to
- Contacting a former sex partner
- Pursuing inappropriate or unavailable people
- Compulsively avoiding sex in a committed, long-term relationship
- Not entering or leaving a relationship without consulting my Higher Power and trusted advisors

NOTES:



Bottom-Line Behaviors Worksheet

Instructions

Below, list your bottom-line behaviors. If you're not sure whether a certain activity is a bottom-line behavior, list it anyway. Discuss it later with your sponsor or another trusted S.L.A.A. member.

Destructive Behaviors

These are the behaviors I need / desire / am determined to stop. Acting out any of these behaviors is a break or "slip" in my S.L.A.A. sobriety.

Write down your bottom-line behaviors. Make your list clear, concrete, and easy to remember. (For more information, see pages 72 and 105 of the S.L.A.A. Basic Text.)

V. Healthy Behaviors

Many members of the fellowship find it helpful to list behaviors that have a positive, personal element-behaviors that fulfill, nurture, bring healthy pleasure, growth and improve quality of life. Committing to do them can fill the time that we used to spend acting out and can help us grow along spiritual lines.



Some examples:

- Pray and meditate
- Leave the house today
- Take care of myself today (for example: brushing teeth...)
- Talk to my sponsor before turning down an invitation to a social event
- Show up for my commitments (dates, meetings, etc.)
- Playing a musical instrument
- Taking a class
- Exercising
- Communing with nature
- Expressing creativity
- Asking for help and support from friends
- Scheduling a time for social interaction, partnership and intimacy
- Saying affirmations each day
- Calling as many people as needed to actually talk with someone, not just leaving voicemails
- Play games or sports with others

A note about bottom-lines over time...

After you have been in S.L.A.A. awhile, and have some sobriety, you may discover that your bottom-lines are no longer adequate. You may find your sense of sobriety has changed over time. You could become aware of the need to expand your bottom-lines in keeping with your new values and principles. This awareness is progressive, and your bottom-lines may need to change – more than once – to keep pace with your increased recovery.

For example, if exhibitionism is a destructive behavior of yours, your initial bottom-line may simply be not to expose yourself. However, you might quickly see that you have a problem with voyeurism as well. You may change your bottom-line so that all illegal sexual activity is outside the bounds of your sobriety. At a later point in your recovery, you may decide that any uninvited sexual activity is “off limits” for you. This refinement of your bottom-line is an example of the progressive nature of recovery from sex and love addiction in S.L.A.A. The less you act out, the healthier you are and the more sober your decisions and boundaries become.



So Now What?

“The people who recover from sex and love addiction are those who define their bottom-line addictive behavior. They start now and add to it later if necessary. They don’t act out – just for today, this hour, this moment, no matter what. This is their sobriety definition.” (*Questions Beginners Ask* pamphlet ©1985.)

We hope this pamphlet can be an effective tool for helping you identify your addictive patterns, defining or redefining your bottom-lines, recognizing your accessory behaviors, and using healthy behaviors to begin a new life. Your willingness to stop acting out on your personal addictive bottom-line behaviors is the key to this new life in recovery.

As we grow in recovery we learn to replace addictive patterns with sober healthy activities. With the help of our Higher Power, through the use of the steps, by clearing away the wreckage of the past and by helping others, sanity, dignity and personal wholeness are returned to us one day at a time.

NOTES:



Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A.*

1. We admitted we were powerless over sex and love addiction—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 of 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 a Power greater than ourselves, 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 sex and love addicts, and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives.

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Twelve Traditions of S.L.A.A.*

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon S.L.A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as this Power may be expressed through our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. Any two or more persons gathered together for mutual aid in recovering from sex and love addiction may call themselves an S.L.A.A. group, provided that as a group they have no other affiliation.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or S.L.A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex and love addict who still suffers.
6. An S.L.A.A. group or S.L.A.A. as a whole ought never endorse, finance, or lend the S.L.A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every S.L.A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. S.L.A.A. should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. S.L.A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the S.L.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, film, and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow S.L.A.A. members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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