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ADDICTION AND RECOVERY

Sex and Love Addicts
Anonymous



THIS PAMPHLET IS S.L.A.A.
CONFERENCE-APPROVED LITERATURE

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In working through our recovery from sex and love addiction we find it helpful:

- to remind ourselves of some of the many characteristics of the addiction
- to practice the Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A.
- to recognize the signs of recovery in others and in ourselves
- to realize the promises of Twelve Step recovery and
- to ready ourselves for the blessings of this program.

This pamphlet is intended to outline these facets of recovery in the spirit of sharing our strength, hope and wisdom.

We may recognize ourselves in some of the characteristics that follow. As we recover, we may see in ourselves additional traits we did not previously detect. These characteristics are not offered as a definitive, diagnostic checklist. They do express the shared experience of many in the S.L.A.A. fellowship.

Characteristics of Sex and Love Addiction

1. Having few healthy boundaries, we become sexually involved with and/or emotionally attached to people without knowing them.
2. Fearing abandonment and loneliness, we stay in and return to painful, destructive relationships, concealing our dependency needs from ourselves and others, growing more isolated and alienated from friends and loved ones, ourselves, and God.
3. Fearing emotional and/or sexual deprivation, we compulsively pursue and involve ourselves in one relationship after another, sometimes having more than one sexual or emotional liaison at a time.
4. We confuse love with neediness, physical and sexual attraction, pity and/or the need to rescue or be rescued.
5. We feel empty and incomplete when we are alone. Even though we fear intimacy and commitment, we continually search for relationships and sexual contacts.



6. We sexualize stress, guilt, loneliness, anger, shame, fear and envy We use sex or emotional dependence as substitutes for nurturing care, and support.
7. We use sex and emotional involvement to manipulate and control others.
8. We become immobilized or seriously distracted by romantic or sexual obsessions or fantasies.
9. We avoid responsibility for ourselves by attaching ourselves to people who are emotionally unavailable.
10. We stay enslaved to emotional dependency, romantic intrigue, or compulsive sexual activities.
11. To avoid feeling vulnerable, we may retreat from all intimate involvement, mistaking sexual and emotional anorexia for recovery.
12. We assign magical qualities to others. We idealize and pursue them, then blame them for not fulfilling our fantasies and expectations.

Recognizing how deeply the addiction runs in our lives, we discover the need for the collective wisdom and program of recovery embodied in the Twelve Steps.

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 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 STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol—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 Him*. 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 Him 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 Him*, praying only for knowledge of His 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 alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Individual patterns of sex and love addiction vary. Patterns of recovery also vary. Generally, recovery from our bottom-line behavior means the return of choice, sanity and personal dignity through working the S.L.A.A. program of recovery. As we work the Steps and use the tools of the program—including meetings, our sponsor, S.L.A.A. literature, telephone contacts, and giving service — we begin to notice some of the following signposts on our road to recovery.

Signs of Recovery

1. We seek to develop a daily relationship with a Higher Power, knowing that we are not alone in our efforts to heal ourselves from our addiction.
2. We are willing to be vulnerable because the capacity to trust has been restored to us by our faith in a Higher Power.



3. We surrender, one day at a time, our whole life strategy of, and our obsession with, the pursuit of romantic and sexual intrigue and emotional dependency.
4. We learn to avoid situations that may put us at risk physically, morally, psychologically or spiritually.
5. We learn to accept and love ourselves, to take responsibility for our own lives, and to take care of our own needs before involving ourselves with others.
6. We become willing to ask for help, allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and learning to trust and accept others.
7. We allow ourselves to work through the pain of our low self-esteem and our fears of abandonment and responsibility. We learn to feel comfortable in solitude.
8. We begin to accept our imperfections and mistakes as part of being human, healing our shame and perfectionism while working on our character defects.
9. We begin to substitute honesty for self-destructive ways of expressing emotions and feelings.
10. We become honest in expressing who we are, developing true intimacy in our relationships with ourselves and others.
11. We learn to value sex as a by-product of sharing, commitment, trust and cooperation in a partnership.
12. We are restored to sanity, on a daily basis, by participating in the process of recovery.

As we work the steps of the S.L.A.A. program, we gain hope that the promise of recovery can come true for us. The wisdom of the program suggests that the Ninth Step is a major turning point in recovery for addicts like ourselves. As we embark upon the amends process, trusting in God and cleaning house, we find our efforts richly rewarded:

“Now we were truly feeling some sense of deep release from the past! We were free of much guilt for our misdeeds, from the shame of having fallen short of our inner values. In many instances the values we had thought were ours



had turned out to be someone else's, and we had shed or changed these to allow the seeds of our own personal wholeness to take root and grow. We were indeed living new, positive, unfolding lives. Whether in partnership with others or in solitude, we had truly been granted a spiritual release from our sex and love addiction. While vigilance was still important, the choices we had to make now seemed easier. We felt increasing confidence in our developing partnership with God, and were full participants in the Fellowship of S.L. A.A. We enjoyed solitude and were unafraid of honesty and openness with others. We could comprehend what it means to have dignity of self."

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, The Augustine Fellowship, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc., 1986, pp. 95-96.

As we use the Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A. in our recovery, many of us experience higher levels of self-esteem, and receive unexpected blessings we would not have known how to ask for. Chapter Four of our basic text, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, sums up the spiritual process:

"The effectiveness of our efforts to help others would be directly related to the level of our own "spiritual awakening" which preceded these efforts. This spiritual awakening was itself the product of having hit bottom and surrendered, having acquired a faith, having accomplished a practical examination of our past and our character, having developed a deepening relationship with God, having accepted responsibility for the impact our sex and love addiction had on others, becoming aware of problem areas in our lives and resolving to deal with these constructively, making amends, and reaching into the spiritual domain through regular prayer and meditation to place ourselves in closer communion with the source of guidance and grace."

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, The Augustine Fellowship, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc., 1986, pp. 102.



Through this process we start to experience the unexpected.

The Blessings

(excerpts taken from the text, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous)

We came to find intimacy with ourselves, intimacy with God, and then intimacy with others.

In domestic partnerships we discovered a whole new experience of sexuality as a non-addictive medium.

In relationships with others we let go of self-serving power and prestige as driving motives.

Careers that had been exploited mainly for material security at the expense of self-fulfillment no longer appealed to us.

Our usefulness as channels for healing was a direct result of our experiences in sickness, as well as in recovery.

We discovered that we could continue to affirm our recovery by working with other sex and love addicts.

We discovered that the source of love, which was of God, had begun to flow from within us.



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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TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity. 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. 3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. 5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. 6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. 7. Every A.A. group ought be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers. 9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the 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, and films. 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



Notes



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BOOKS

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous: Basic Text

A State of Grace: Daily Meditations

WORKBOOKS

The Step Questions Workbook

***For a full list of available S.L.A.A.
literature, visit our website at:***

