

Out of the Fog

An update on events, outreach, and other news of the Bay Area Fellowship.

Available online at: bayareasaa.org/newsletter

A Quarterly Newsletter

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What Is SAA?

Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) 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 or dependency.

From the Green Book

“The disease of sex addiction does not discriminate according to race, gender, age, class, religion, or any other social category. There are sex addicts all over the world and in every walk of life. All of us have a right to seek recovery in Sex Addicts Anonymous.”

Save the Trees!

Sign up to receive this newsletter via email.

Send your request to:

newsletter@bayareasaa.org



Looking for a meeting?

A complete list of all current Bay Area SAA meetings can be found at:

<http://www.bayareasaa.org/meetings.php>

If you can't make a meeting in person, a complete list of electronic meetings can be found at <https://saa-recovery.org/Meetings/ElectronicMeetings/index2.php?timeOffset=-480>

Inspirational Words

“In the end you should always do the right thing even if it's hard.”
- Nicholas Sparks,
The Last Song

“Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not.”
- Oprah Winfrey

Out of the Fog and into the Heat! The 2015 SAA Camping Trip

The recent SAA camping trip was certainly one to remember. It occurred at Bullards Bar Reservoir, a new location for our camping trip, just a little over three hours northeast of San Francisco. This was greatly appreciated by the vast majority of campers, especially those who had to fight the rush hour traffic after work. This writer also appreciated that it was not necessary to bundle up after dark. In fact, I wore shorts the entire weekend! Some of the most notable aspects of the event included an incredibly powerful Saturday night speaker, a woman who practically singlehandedly started the SAA program in Sacramento. It was a watershed moment to hear her amazing story or recovery.

The three workshops were all quite well reviewed and included Managing the Middle Circle, Experiencing the 3rd Step through

Affirmations, and Healthy Sexuality. The Saturday night skewer dinner was out of this world and set a new standard for meals. In addition, there was impromptu guitar music from a few of the campers and some fine vocals to go along with it. As always, some campers chose to take a refreshing dip in the cool reservoir. All in all, it was a splendid weekend and you can also join in on the next annual camping trip. Looking forward to seeing you there!

San Francisco Bay Area SAA Announcements

Santa Cruz Bike Ride

Saturday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m. at Waddell Creek Beach on Highway 1, two miles south of Año Nuevo Bay. Twelve-mile ride to Berry Creek Falls. Bring: Snacks, water, bike lock. Contact: Nick M. (831) 239-5994 (Text)

Bay Area Convention Proposal Committee Meeting

Saturday, Dec 12 at the 9:30 a.m. (following the 8:30 a.m. meeting) Location: Savor

Restaurant, 3913 24th St. (between Noe & Sanchez) San Francisco

Los Altos Holiday Party/Jam

Thursday, Dec. 17. Time: 8:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Location: United Methodist Church, Creek Side Room. 655 Magdalena Ave., Los Altos. Contact: Jason T. (408) 300-8536

Lifeline Partners

A generous member of our fellowship has offered a challenge to match, dollar for dollar, up to \$30,000, for new or increased contributions to ISO through Lifeline Partners. Information and forms to contribute are available on the ISO website: saa-recovery.org. Click on Lifeline Partners on the right side of the home page. This is an enormous opportunity to maximize the value of every new and increased contribution

Publishing Announcements

Call (415) 456-1063 or send email to info@bayareasaa.org to publish fellowship news and announcements.

The Step Corner

Every quarter we'll publish experiences, hope, and hints about completing a step. If you have suggestions, please drop a note to: newsletter@bayareasaa.org.

Step 5: Admitted to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Principle: Integrity

When I first approached the principle underlying Step Five, one of my initial questions was what is Integrity and how does it differ from the principle behind Step One, Honesty? Being a bit of nerd, and as often is the case in this sort of quandary; I first went to the dictionary. What I learned there was that honesty is about telling the truth and integrity is about the valuation of that truth. The question then becomes, in relationship to my program, what does it mean to be in alignment with my value of truth? I soon realized that my truth was not a single and solitary thing but in fact was actually a collection of core values. The exploration of my core values unfolded in ways that were not only a significant turning point in my program, but have continued to bring depth and direction to my recovery. I would wholeheartedly recommend for anyone to spend some time identifying core values and then looking at how to apply them to one's program.

While I have many journal pages on my core values, I will mention four central ones here.

Compassion: Step Five is about showing up in truth about our shameful and often embarrassing addictive escapades. It asks of us that we share these with another person. It is not an easy Step. It takes courage and support. For me, once I aligned myself in the integrity of my core value of compassion, it softened how I viewed myself. Yes, the things I did were at times even horrible but I could, in the same breath, see how lost I was, how desperate I was and in reality, no matter how far I fell short, I was doing the best I could. I was out there alone with no support, no community to guide me in how to change and recover. Once in the rooms, when I began to develop self-compassion, it was easier to move beyond judgment not only of myself but also of others. If addiction is playing out the script of self-loathing, recovery is resting in self and other loving. I would never wish my addiction on someone I loved and consequently came to love myself enough not to wish it on me. One of the hallmarks of my Higher Power is the quality of compassion and well wishing for healthy sexuality and recovery. I learned to want for

myself what my Higher Power wanted for me. Over many years, as the Big Book suggests, *I did recoil as if from a hot flame* from my inner circle behaviors. It was no longer an act of will, however, it was deeply seated in positive self-regard and compassion.

Right Action. Right Action is a Buddhist term and refers to action that is mindful and serves not only self but also the greater good. Once in the rooms, where I witnessed the possibility of recovery, I wanted it for myself. I wanted a life free from the weight of shame, secrecy, distraction, and wreckage. If I am to be in integrity, however, it was not enough to simply desire recovery -- I had to *actively* turn my attention to the solution rather than wallow in these dark places. I had to get myself to meetings, I had to make the calls I needed to keep my program strong, I had to work on the steps and do service when I could. Frequently, I needed to remind myself that it's all about intention; there is no such thing as an ideal or perfect program. I found that working toward these toward these



lofty goals was enough. Some days were better than others, yet I felt supported and sustained by witnessing those who kept exerting right effort and in doing so experienced recovery.

Justice/Fairness: A quality of my integrity is even handedness—not discriminating between sides or among varied aspects. Giving space and airtime to the entirety of something. When I explored this in relationship to my program, I saw that I tended to be biased toward my defects; that my attention would automatically go to where I perceived I had fallen short or was imperfect. My initial impulse was never toward my achievements, my strengths and what was working well for me. If I were in integrity of my core value of Justice, I realized I had to be more of an equal opportunity employer—holding my achievements along with my challenges. On their own, neither was the truth; defect without strength is depressing and strength without defect

is egotistical. I also found this value helped deepen my program friendships and my connection to the community of SAA. Even in the face of controversy and conflict there is the possibility of understanding, clarity and truth. Fairness has many dimensions in this regard: sometimes giving others the benefit of the doubt or adhering to Robert's Rules of Order or aligning myself with group conscience even when the outcomes are not my personal preferences.

Responsibility: When I make a commitment to my sponsor it is important to me to fulfill it. Along with this comes being honest about my limitations—at times I am not ready or willing to do what is being asked of me and it is important for me to admit this. When I first shared my Forth Step with my sponsor, there were a few things that I was not ready to share—I had too many unprocessed emotions around these experiences and found that sharing with a therapist was more appropriate. It may take time in SAA to unwind the past and align with a healthier version of one's self. Being in integrity means finding the balance between taking one's time and pushing forward. I also saw that I had a responsibility to the group—to show up in meetings for the sake of others, to do some service, to listen with compassion and kindness. For me, the most significant aspect of my exploration of responsibility and Step Five was being true to myself. For example, being true to all that lay underneath my addictive behaviors. This was deeply challenging for me, as there initially seemed like there was an ocean of fear and sadness. With the support of my sponsor, my program friends, the tools, and periodically outside resources, I found that over the years, I moved through these difficult realities and could rest more easily in the truth of my addiction—as the Promises suggest, *I no longer regretted my past nor wished to shut the door on it.*

The Steps are not something one does and then it's over. Step Five is an ongoing journey of facing and sharing the truth and ultimately doing our best to reflect it in our lives. Healing happens over time. If, for example, another layer of unshared truth reveals itself, it doesn't take away all the integrity I have mustered in the past—it only points the way toward what is true in the moment and where to apply my compassion, right action, fairness, and responsibility. Ultimately, all my core values interact and support each other. They make up the central fabric of who I am and how I conduct myself in the world.