

The SCAnner

SCA NEWSLETTER

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VOLUME 6, NO. 4

50 cents

FOURTH QUARTER 1995

THE 14 CHARACTERISTICS

A NEW PIECE OF LITERATURE ABOUT THE 14 CHARACTERISTICS

These are the Characteristics most of us seem to have in common:

1. As adolescents, we used fantasy and compulsive masturbation to avoid feelings, and continued this tendency into our adult lives with compulsive sex.

2. Compulsive sex became a drug, which we used to escape from feelings such as anxiety, loneliness, anger, and self-hatred, as well as joy.

3. We tended to become immobilized by romantic obsessions. We became addicted to the search for sex and love; as a result, we neglected our lives.

4. We sought oblivion in fantasy and masturbation, and lost ourselves in compulsive sex. Sex became a reward, punishment, distraction and time-killer.

5. Because of our low self-esteem, we used sex to feel validated and complete.

6. We tried to bring intensity into our lives through sex, but felt ourselves growing steadily emptier.

7. Sex was compartmentalized instead of integrated into our lives as a healthy element.

8. We became addicted to people, and were unable to distinguish among sex, love and affection.

9. We searched for some "magical" quality in others to make us feel complete. Other people were idealized and endowed with a powerful symbolism, which often disappeared after we had sex with them.

10. We were drawn to people who were not available to us, or who would reject or abuse us.

11. We feared relationships, but continually searched for them. In a relationship, we feared abandonment and rejection, but out of one, we felt empty and incomplete.

12. While constantly seeking intimacy with another person, we found that the desperate quality of our need made true intimacy with anyone impossible, and we often developed unhealthy dependency relationships that eventually became unbearable.

13. Even when we got the love of another person, it never seemed enough, and we were unable to stop lusting after others.

14. Trying to conceal our dependency demands, we grew more isolated from ourselves, from God, and from the very people we longed to be close to.

Currently, Richard K., an SCA member in California, is working on a new piece of literature based on the 14 Characteristics. This project arose out the 1994 ISO meeting in San Diego. He is compiling short anecdotal experiences and reflections on the characteristics that appear in our four-fold.

As Richard states: "As far as I know at the moment, the book will cover the Characteristics only, but there could be changes along the way. What I, and we, envision now is a "chapter" for each of the Characteristics consisting of: enumeration of each Characteristic; an introduction amplifying some of the pains and problems involved in each; and several vignettes and short stories from members pertinent to that particular Characteristic; and a closing statement, on a positive note, expounding on the Program's approach to that particular problem, and an overall offering of hope for recovery from it. . . . It needn't be polished, maybe even a xeroxed page out of a journal that is particularly meaningful."

The submissions he receives will be edited together in a new piece of literature aimed at helping newcomers and old-timers alike remember that we are not alone in our addiction nor in our experiences of this cunning and baffling disease.

Please take some time to look at the Characteristics again and if you would like to share your experience, strength, and hope with others in our fellowship, through this up-coming piece of literature, please write out a paragraph or two about a particular characteristic, and how it was related to your life or how your life has related to it. Please indicate which characteristic you are referring to.

Please mail your contribution to The SCAnner c/o SCA, NY PO Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113-0935, or you can e-mail it directly to Richard at rakinz@aol.com. Thank you.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear brothers & sisters in recovery! As we reach the end of 1995, it's a good time to sum up of the year. Have I gone towards recovery, or moved away from it? Have I accomplished, or taken steps towards, any of my goals? Have I worked the Steps? Do I have a good relationship with a sponsor? Do I sponsor people? Have I had fun? Have I read a good book, ate a good meal, started a new friendship (or maintained an old one) travelled somewhere new (even if only to another of my life)?

The SCAnner has caught up and published 4 issues this year. Our next issue will be a double issue and that will bring us up to date. As a result of this year's ISO meeting, the SCAnner has employed a desk-top person. His name is Charles Hendershott, and I've found him dedicated, efficient and helpful. The SCAnner formerly was edited and compiled in New York City, desk-top-ped in California, and printed and distributed from Chicago. Obviously, this process has engendered many delays in publication. We can now publish on a timely basis. I'd like to thank our dedicated desk-top people in L.A., Benno S. (who has selflessly done this service for 4+ years) and Doyle S. (who was responsible for

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The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.

5 & 10 PIECES

By
Joe F., NY-SCA

Editor's Note: A reminder to Intergroup secretaries: I need your Intergroup meeting minutes if you want any information about your group to go in *The SCanner*. Please send them to me at: *The SCanner*, c/o S.C.A. New York, P.O. Box 1585 Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113-0935.

GOING ON A TRIP? MEETING LISTS

The National Meeting list will be on sale for \$.50 per copy and sold with the literature. It is not for sale to those outside of the fellowship. The National Meeting List has information on U.S. meetings and international meetings and contacts that is current as of April 1996 and will be updated every six months or so. Intergroups are encouraged to order in bulk. The address is:

SCA ISO Literature
P.O. Box 931181
Los Angeles, CA 90093-1181

We also have a copy of the current Meeting List, protected by a password on the Internet. If you plan to visit another city and would like to see the current International Meeting List, send e-mail to info@sca-recovery.org to get the password. (Please identify yourself as a member of SCA.)

MASTURBATION PIECE

As of December 1995, a new piece of SCA literature on masturbation has been approved and printed and is available for ordering.

NEW SAN FRANCISCO MEETING

A new SCA meeting was started in San Francisco on Friday nights at 6:00 pm. For further information please contact ISO at 1-800-977-HEAL, or e-mail info@sca-recovery.org.

MIDWEST RETREAT

Two Midwest Intergroups are looking into the possibility of holding a joint retreat in April 1996. For more information, please contact Chicago Intergroup at 312-589-5856 or St. Louis Intergroup at 314-569-7702

INTERGROUP MEETING TIMES

These are the usual scheduled times for monthly intergroup meetings: Atlanta--last Sunday; Chicago--first Sunday; Los Angeles--third Sunday (odd-number months); New York--third Sunday.

ATLANTA

Atlanta is planning two retreats in 1996. One in the spring, April 19-21, and one in the fall, October 18-20.

CHICAGO, CHICAGO

INTERGROUP ELECTIONS

Chicago elections were held in December. Todd R. will continue his two-year term as ISO rep.

MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS

RETREAT

The Steps Alano Spring retreat in St. Louis will be held April 26-28, 1996. There will be workshops geared for SCA members as well as for other 12-step programs. Suggestions for workshops include: dating, cross addiction, what is sexual recovery? and fashion (really!).

PARTY POOPERS

There was discussion in October as to whether Intergroup was spending too much money on parties! A total of \$225 was spent on the Thanksgiving LA convention kickoff, and holiday parties. The pros being that these activities have resulted in a very strong community focus for SCA, and by subsidizing parties, they are a fellowship event. The cons were that membership might think money was being squandered on socializing as opposed to outreach, and that one could spend the money to buy ads for SCA in local newspaper.

SOCIAL TIME

There were various and sundry fun-filled events this fall in St. Louis. In November there was a housewarming party for Rich S., and a Thanksgiving party at Jim M.'s house... in December, there was a Los Angeles convention Kickoff Party at Phillip B.'s house. It was a fundraiser for the LA Scholarship to help SCA members to attend. There was a holiday party at John H.'s, and a New Year's soiree at Jim M.'s. The New Year's retreat, organized by all Chicagoland "S" programs was held in Plano, IL. 12/29-12/31... in January there was a sponsorship workshop at Eddie G.'s house followed by a winter party... in March was planned a Father Issues workshop.

LOS ANGELES

RETREAT

Los Angeles is planning two retreats in 1996. One in the spring, May 24-26, and one in the summer, Aug. 30-Sept. 1.

CONVENTION

The convention was a big success in February 1996.

12-STEP COMMITTEE

As of July, Steve & Marshall L. resigned from the committee, and they were looking for replacements. There was a question as to whether the alternative sentencing panel at Griffith Park still continues. The panel at Del Amo Hospital still continues the second Monday of each month with Joe L. and Kevin P.

SOCIAL TIME

A Thanksgiving pot luck was planned at C.W.'s home.

ISO NEWS

Maciek resigned as an Los Angeles rep. Jim S. and Dennis B. were elected in November as ISO reps, with Bill M. elected as alternate.

ELECTIONS

All Intergroup officers were up for election in January 1996.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

RETREAT

The next retreat in New York in 1996 will be in the summer Aug.2-4.

CONFERENCE

New York's spring conference will be held May 17-19 at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in New York City. The theme will be "Continuing the Journey."

NEW MEETINGS

Fridays, 6:30, "Men Who Love Women" ...Sundays, 7:00, Brooklyn meeting... Queens meeting has folded.

12 STEP COMMITTEE

John F. needed another co-chair. In September Frank C. was elected as co-chair. Has some volunteers for penpal program... It was decided that people on the West coast should answer letters from people on the East coast and vice versa so as to maintain distance... There was questions about standardizing responses to national phone line (as well as New York) and how there are no real written guidelines per se. Bill K. is working on a training workshop for people interested in answering the phones either locally or nationally. It was also gently suggested in December that a person have a year in the program and 6 months on their plan to answer the phones... "How to Start Your Own SCA Meeting" literature piece is now available--but is still a draft... As of

(Cont'd on page 4)

Interfellowship

Report To SCanner Regarding Inter S-Fellowship Conference 3/31/95-4/2/95

INTER-S-FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE

by Michael H., NY-SCA

Yours truly, Michael H., ISO chairperson, travelled to Albany and was driven by a delightful SLAA (Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous) person from Albany, Richard P., to Syracuse for "The Second Salt City Northeast Regional Conference," sponsored by Syracuse SAA (Sex Addicts Anonymous).

SAA Syracuse had organized a weekend conference, with workshops, that included two meetings between the four major "S" fellowships: SCA, SAA, SLAA and SA (Sexaholics Anonymous). The purpose of these meetings was to explore how the regional "S" groups (in New Jersey, New York and New England, so far) could coordinate 12th Step, or outreach activities so that we in the fellowship can fulfill our primary function as stated in Tradition 5: "Each group has but one purpose--to carry its message to the sexual compulsive who still suffers."

On Friday night, we had a meeting with about 24 participants, most were either from the Syracuse area, or were from out of town and staying at the hotel (the Quality Inn).

The guest speaker of honor on Saturday morning was Patrick Carnes, PhD. Dr. Carnes was asked what made up the strongest recovery, in his experience, one that had the least likelihood of relapse. He said there were seven processes, that if practiced, made for solid recovery. These are:

1. Individual therapy in addition to 12-Step meetings.
2. Group therapy in addition to 12-step meeting (this was one of the more important adjuncts to recovery).
3. Attendance at 12-step meetings.
4. Having a sponsor.
5. Doing all the steps (the heaviest emphasis was placed on this process).
6. Family counseling (if there are family issues, and if it is possible, get the family involved and supportive at the earliest possible time in recovery).
7. Couple counseling/12-step group (if you are in a relationship, get into a "couples in recovery" group, such as Chapter 9).

He also remarked that we should never delude ourselves and think that we can stop going to meetings. Because many of our friends are in the program, our life becomes one long meeting. We may ease off our attendance at meetings. But we will still

need to go, however infrequently. He reminded us that addiction is a real gift. We get to work on stuff that most people never even look at.

The rest of the day was spent in workshops. I led one on intimacy which was well attended (about 34). I think there were about 70 participants overall. We came from as far away as the eastern end of Long Island, to South Jersey and Buffalo. All four "S" fellowships were represented, as well as Co-SA. This included three of us from SCA-NY. Other workshops included one for couples, one for women, step meetings, Co-SA meeting, etc.

Saturday afternoon and again Sunday morning we had our Regional Intergroup Service meeting. There were 15 representatives from all 4 "S" fellowships at Saturday's meeting. We decided on a name for our group: "Regional Inter-S Service Group," with our mission defined as follows:

"To promote recovery in the Northeast for those still suffering from sexual and relationship addiction and compulsion."

Some of the goals discussed on Saturday were:

- To generate a regional Inter-S fellowship meeting list.
- To reach out to therapists by speaking at County Mental Health Associations or other forums where therapists meet. Inasmuch as some of the members of their respective "S" fellowship live in small towns, it was felt that they could ask other members from other towns to speak in their counties, to preserve everyone's anonymity.
- To coordinate and act as a clearinghouse for regional events: conferences, retreats, etc., so that, first, regional members could participate in other fellowships' events, if they are welcome, and second, to try to schedule events at different times, so that the most people who wanted to, could attend the widest variety of events.

An Inter-S fellowship literature order form was suggested.

On Sunday we met and by consensus elected Jonathan S. from Binghamton SAA as Chair, Bob R. from Syracuse SAA as Treasurer, and Carol C. from Buffalo SAA/SLAA as Secretary (of State). It was announced that there was an as-yet unknown amount of money made from the conference that could be used for the 12-step work we are anticipating.

The final piece of business was to set up a conference call for all the various representatives who were at that meeting, to get a consensus on what we can actually do, and who will do it. This phone call is to take place at 9 pm on May 21, 1995. My inten-

tion is to bring this up at the next Intergroup meeting and ask that they appoint someone from SCA New York to represent SCA at the meeting.

On a personal note, I met a wonderful man at the conference. By the time you get to read this, I imagine we will have done considerable dating, and hopefully I'll have an idea if wedding bells are in my future or not. I hope they are - he is very, very special, appropriate and available. But if not, I'll be ready for the next very, very special, available and appropriate man. (God's time, not mine, damn it!)

IMPORTANT NEWS: There is a sexual recovery group on the Internet. It is called ARAS, and it's a newsgroup. You can post stuff to it, and read what's been posted, but unless you make an appointment with someone, it's not interactive. The address is:

ALT.RECOVERY.ADDICTION.SEXUAL

INTER-S-FELLOWSHIP NEWS

By John F., NY-SCA

As part of our continuing interfellowship efforts, SCA is spearheading the organizing of a national Inter S conference with a goal of holding it in the fall of 1996.

Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) sent an official observer to our International Service Organization's meeting in Milwaukee this year, and extended a return invitation to their meeting. We are contacting Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA) and plan to do the same with Sexaholics Anonymous (SA) and Sexual Recovery Anonymous (SRA), the latter a group that split off from SA and is located primarily in New York City and Vancouver, BC.

Some cities and regions already have considerable Inter S activity. Chicago and Atlanta, for example, have joint retreats and meeting lists. The Northeastern U.S. is home to NRISG, the Northeast Regional Inter S Group, which sponsors an annual conference. (The keynote speaker this year was Frank H., one of the earliest SCA members and longtime chair of ISO.)

SCA Retreats

SCA NEW YORK RETREATS

by Joe F., SCA-NY

For the last 7 years, SCA-New York has hosted its biannual retreat in the summer and winter. They are held at the Holiday Hills Conference Center in upstate New York at Pawling. Located on a beautiful Green Mountain lake, Holiday Hills is a 90 mile, two-hour drive north of New York City. Facilities include a fitness center, tennis courts, jogging and walking trails.

Last spring, I interviewed Mike F. who has run many SCA retreats. The first retreats were run by Henry S. and Danny J., and later retreats by Jim S., Mike F., and David N. (as well as others). Mike F. loved

the location: "It (Holiday Hills) is a stunning place. In the summer you have the joy of the lake, all the other outside activities and just the sheer beauty of the place is wonderful. The place consists of hills on a lake of its own. And in the winter, you can skate, cross-country ski and toboggan. We tell people, that it's their own retreat to do what they wish. And people tend to not only find a great deal of insights in the workshops, but also in the community games and activities."

Most of the retreats are based on step study. For example, the 14th retreat, "From Shame to Acceptance," focussed on working Steps 4, 5, and 6. Other retreats have been based on the gifts of the program, the promises, and the tools of the program.

A typical retreat starts on Friday afternoon from 4-6 with dinner and orientation. Early Saturday there is yoga and meditation, and after breakfast, check-in and two workshops. On Saturday night, after dinner there is a show (this is New York after all). Mike feels that the show is an excuse for the participants to do something as a community. On Sunday, there is one more workshop, and a gratitude meeting. Of course, members are free to join in any or all of the activities. They can use the time in quiet meditation in nature, or talking intimately to other

members in a non-rushed atmosphere that one can not always get in the hustle and bustle of daily life.

Mike F. emphasized how the a retreat differ from an SCA meeting: "For me, the retreat has added another layer of program. I've been able to see people progress. Basically, you see people's recovery work. You really see people closely, unlike in the rooms, and you really get to see their progression from one retreat to the next. It really brought

"For me, the retreat has added another layer of programs. I've been able to see people progress... You really see people closely, unlike in the room... I'm able to communicate on a deeper level."

Mike F

home to me the promises and how they're working in all of us. Another thing is that sex addiction is an addiction of isolation. And through the retreats, I'm able to communicate on a deeper level."

On a personal level, Mike remembered one retreat that particularly helped him: "There was one year when I lost a lot of people, people in my family, friends and it didn't come together for me, until I was sharing it at a Saturday night meeting. It was my first real chance to see that I'd separated myself from my life and my feelings for a year. It really opened a door and clarified a lot for me. And without the atmosphere and the safety of the retreat, I don't think I ever would have made that connection."

For those SCA members who have never been on retreat, Mike remembers how his "first retreat was terrifying, but I just showed up. And they get easier as it goes along. And so do interpersonal skills, they improve as well. It's a way of focussing on the priorities without everyday life getting in the way."

Mike no longer helps run the retreats (he felt it was time for someone else to do the service). He concluded: "It's an incredible service to see what a difference the retreat makes in people's recovery."

The next New York SCA retreat will be held this August. For more information, please write to SCA Retreat c/o SCA, Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113-0935, or through our web site at <http://www.sca-recovery.org/>, or by calling 1-800-977-HEAL.

BITS AND PIECES... (Cont'd from page 2)

December, John F. needed to relinquish his chairing of this committee as he is doing a lot of ISO work. Carlos and Merle volunteered, and now serve as co-chairs with Frank C.

TRANSLATIONS

German & Spanish translations of SCA literature are still in the works. In September, Carlos reported that he was still working on a Spanish translation of the Blue Book. As of December, Carlos had contacted George in San Diego who is in charge of the West Coast version. The timeframe at this point is six months to completion of this part of the project.

ISO

Michael H. resigned as chair of ISO last summer, and will not stay on as ISO rep for New York. Joe S. also has resigned as ISO rep. Phillip E. is not a full-time rep. . . There was a New York ISO meeting held in the fall. Discussion included: process by which SCA literature is approved; SCA Spanish translation (Carlos who is in charge will be sent to sit down in a room and discuss the West Coast and East Coast versions, and a professional translator will be hired); the 800 number (are calls being returned?) -- all of which would be discussed in greater depth at Milwaukee ISO meeting in February.

CHANGING THE TRADITIONS?

There was a questionnaire sent around to meetings as to whether the traditions should be changed to reflect SCA's specific issues. The consensus seems to be consistently opposed to changing the traditions.

PSA

Brian K. reported in October, that the long awaited National Public Service Announcements (for radio) were finally recorded (and premiered at February national ISO meeting in Milwaukee to much applause). In December Brian was working on the Radio kit, a guide as to how to get your PSA on the air. Intergroups can purchase kit. Actual spot has been recorded in a male and female voice.

OPENCLOSED MEETINGS

There was discussion in October about which meetings were open and which were closed. It was decided that the following definitions be included on the NY Meeting List: OPEN MEETINGS-All those interested in attending are welcome; CLOSED MEETINGS-Definition varies by meeting. Normally, attendance is limited to those who are, or who think they might be, sexually compulsive.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Along with Eddie V., a new co-chair was elected in October, Paul L. Events planned included a Winter Holiday extravaganza, and a possible fundraiser in March 1996.

Summary Report:



ISO Income & Expenses

2/1/95 - 11/21/95

The following chart indicates the income and expenses of the SCA International Service Organization (ISO) as presented by Frank T. of Chicago, ISO Treasurer at the ISO convention in Milwaukee February 1996.

INCOME

7th Tradition:	
Atlanta	\$199.06
Chicago	200.00
Los Angeles	482.00
Milwaukee	30.00
New York	871.16
Rochester, NY	25.00
Southern California	835.00
St. Louis	225.00
Total 7th Tradition \$ 2,867.22	
Donations	98.00
Literature-Sale	2,947.00
The SCANNER-Sales	612.00
Income - Other	7,745.22

TOTAL INCOME \$14,269.44

EXPENSES

Ads	\$700.00
Convention	597.45
Nat. Coordinator	225.00
ISO meeting	692.00
Office	287.98
Literature	1,389.82
Phone	552.11
The SCANNER	356.19
Expenses-other	256.72
TOTAL EXPENSES \$5,057.27	
TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE \$9,212.17	

CARRYING OUR MESSAGE ON THE INTERNET

John F., NY-SCA

The SCA message is now on the Internet. People with access to the World Wide Web may visit our home page at:

<http://www.sca-recovery.org/>

People with e-mail may write:

info@sca-recovery.org

The full contents of the Four Fold are available free from our home page. We also have a list of all "open" SCA meetings, an order form for literature, a list of local, national and international telephone contact numbers (including 1-800 977-HEAL), and our regular mail address. Highlights from **The SCANNER** and a calendar of events (retreats, conferences, etc.) are available.

Our home page has been averaging more than 25 visits a day. Most are from the U.S., but we have also had visits from Japan, Singapore, Norway, Finland, Germany, England, France and Malaysia. We have already begun to receive inquiries by e-mail, and our "How to Start an SCA Meeting" kit has gone to one Canadian city as a result.

The most popular item on our home page is the Twenty Questions.

Our site has already been listed with two standard Web searchers: Excite and the Webcrawler.

We also have a copy of the current International Meeting List, protected by a password. If you plan to visit another city and would like to see the current International Meeting List, send e-mail to info@sca-recovery.org to get the pass word. (Please identify yourself as a member of SCA.)

Intergroups that don't have the password may call 1-800-977-HEAL to get it. The onlineversion of the list is the most current available.

As a result of this success story, we now have new service opportunities. If you would be interested in being a "pen pal" via email with a person who cannot attend an SCA meeting, please write to the "info" email address. We ask that you have at least six months on your sexual recovery plan and at least one year in Program.

And if you would like to help maintain our Web site, please send us e-mail as well. We need people to help edit pages and to respond to e-mail within the Fellowship. We also welcome suggestions for additions to our new home.



For information on SCA meetings, or listing a new meeting write to:

SCA New York, PO Box 1585 Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113-0935

or
SCA Southern California, 4470-107 Sunset Blvd., #520, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Or call the NY Info Line(212) 439-1123

National Hotline.....(800) 977-HEAL
in New York or International call:
.....(212) 606-3778

Web: <http://www.sca-recovery.org/>
E-mail: info@sca-recovery.org

SCA INFORMATION LINES
(recorded message and call-back):

New York.....	(212) 439-1123
Los Angeles.....	(310) 895-8659
Chicago.....	(312) 589-5856
Orange County, CA.....	(714) 664-5105
San Diego, CA.....	(619) 685-8540
Midland/Odessa, TX.....	(915) 560-5240
Milwaukee, WI.....	(414) 963-1189
St. Louis, MO.....	(314) 589-7702
London, ENGLAND.....	44-81-914-7599
SPANISH: Los Angeles.....	(213)-368-4814
New York.....	(212) 388-9124

For information on SLAA and SAA meetings in the USA and overseas, write to:

SLAA, PO Box 199, New Town Branch, Boston, MA 02258.....(617) 332-1845
SAA, PO Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403.....(612) 339-0217

"The SCANNER" is Your Newsletter

The Scanner is published and distributed quarterly by the international Service Organization of SCA as a means toward unifying the fellowship and getting the SCA word out. The opinions expressed here are those of the people who gave them and do not necessarily reflect the principles and traditions of SCA. Take what you like and leave the rest. Your contributions and comments are always welcome and are sincerely invited. Send them to: The SCANNER c/o SCA, NY, PO. Box 1585 Old Chelsea Station New York, NY 10113-0935

The Characteristics Many of Us Own as Sexual Compulsives

By Richard K.,
SCA-San Luis Obispo, CA

[The following is an excerpt from a new piece of SCA literature on the 14 Characteristics that may be incorporated into an SCA Big Book]

At many of our meetings, The 14 Characteristics Most Of Us Seem To Have In Common is read. Some people have shared that these were real eye-openers for them; that they saw themselves in most, if not all, of the Characteristics. Some dread even hearing them read, let alone talking about them. Some just sort of listened and let them drift through their consciousness without feeling much in the way of contact with them. And yet, now and then, some particular one takes on a special meaning -- maybe even a "new" meaning -- for us, and we think about that and maybe share something of our feelings about that. That's what our meetings are about... sharing ourselves and our feelings so that we can slowly lose our shame and realize that we are wonderful human beings, and... we're not alone.

For newcomers, middle timers, or old-timers in the Program, the Characteristics are frequent reminders of where we are or where we have been in our compulsion. Even if some of them don't have all that much connection to our own particular lives and experiences, they each contribute to our understanding of ourselves, to our understanding of the other compulsives around us, and to our understanding of our addiction to compulsive sex. And this understanding helps us to develop a humility within ourselves which we sorely need, and a compassion for our brothers and sisters who share this disease with us. Understanding ourselves and our addiction to compulsive sex is vital to our recovery.

We take some time here to review the Characteristics and read experiences of our fellow compulsives concerning them. We invite you, over the next few days or weeks or months, to think about each Characteristic as you read and to

do a thorough and honest soul-searching about each of them -- a sort of Fourth Step. This is a gentle Program -- remember that -- and we are compulsives, but we don't have to be compulsive about this phase of our self-discovery! We are living in God's time, and that time is limitless.

Does a particular characteristic fit in with your addiction -- with your life? If

"For newcomers, middle timers, or old-timers in the Program, the Characteristics are frequent reminders of where we are or where we have been in our compulsion."

so, how? What can you add from your own history to the stories you read here? Could you talk about any of these personal histories as they might relate to you personally at a meeting, or with a friend in the fellowship, or with your sponsor? Do you find anything in some personal story which you may now realize you have hidden within yourself? Hidden out of shame, out of fear of others finding out what is so horribly shameful to you? Hidden because you couldn't even face up to the shame yourself? If you find yourself so strangled by shame that you can't even possibly talk about it with anyone else -- any human being -- do you at least talk to God -- as you understand God -- about it? Do you realize that talking it over with God is a start; that it's not just some simplistic, religious way of looking at things, but, rather, a spiritual way? Do you begin to realize that this is an entryway into finally being able to talk to someone else about it? An entryway to begin healing yourself by slowly realizing that you're not alone -- not by a long shot? An entryway to your being able to live again? To your being able to stand in the light of life, rather than hide in the darkness of addiction? Think about it.

Hopefully, in this way, we can search

a little deeper into ourselves and dig out some of the stuff that, in the light of exposure, will help us to get better. Addiction is darkness; it can't stand light. Healing is light; it doesn't work in darkness.

We bring God into the picture. The concept of God can really be a stumbling point in the Program. When many of us first entered the Program -- attended our first meeting or two -- we heard the 12 Steps read and heard the word "God" mentioned several times. We heard that we were eventually going to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God! Turn our lives over to God? To the same God who sat up there in those clouds and shamed us and punished us and zapped us for our sins and all that? No way! How could we possibly do that? Some of us even left the Program because

we knew we could never deal with a God who'd been such a horror in our earlier histories. How could we ever trust such a hateful, vindictive Being, let alone turn our very lives over to Him/Her/It?

That's a very good point--and a very crucial one to most of us. How could we deal with something so vital to our recovery and yet such a sore point with so many of us. Somehow, though, most of us slowly, and sometimes painfully, began to realize that the God, or Higher Power, which the Program encompassed was a loving Spiritual Consciousness rather than a fearful religious icon of some sort. God became a compassionate Friend, an Inner Presence which was always there in us. God became a Presence which would never abandon us no matter how hard, at times, we tried to divorce ourselves from It. Never abandon us! What painful thoughts the word "abandon" has for so many of us! God became for many of us a powerful Presence which had a tiny, quiet voice. A voice we could only hear if we really listened. We began to realize that God was experiencing through us. That put us in a totally different position than we had been taught all our lives; God was

(Cont'd on page 8)

SCanner Subscriptions

ISO-International Service Organization of SCA

The following is a letter from ISO to the fellowship at large:

Dear SCA members, groups and friends of the program:

The SCanner is a quarterly newsletter publication compiled by members of our fellowship to carry our message of recovery from sexually compulsive behavior. Annual subscriptions are now available. You may receive your annual subscription by completing the subscription form enclosed. Your SCanner will be mailed to the address indicated, in a sealed envelope, to insure anonymity. Please indicate the number of copies of each issue you would like to receive, and verify your total payment. Payments may be received in check or money order made payable to SCA. And mail your subscription to SCA Pennsicola Place, P.O. Box 138455, Chicago, IL 60613.

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Characteristics... (Cont'd. from page 6)

part and parcel of each and every one of us, not some separate apparition off there in space somewhere.

Many of us began to accept the concept that God didn't punish us directly as most of us had been told. We began to realize that God, in the wisdom that only God can have, established Law by which the Universe, and everything in it, operated. If we didn't listen to that still, quiet voice inside, and went contrary to the Law, we were miserable. We punished ourselves by our own actions. God didn't interfere, we did it on our own. God was there to help, but if we didn't accept that help, we suffered. We created our very own Hell. On the other hand, if we did listen and did follow what that quiet voice --that Presence -- had to say, we experienced our Heaven; right here and now, not after we'd left this world. Many of us at last began to feel very comfortable with this concept of God.

Now this may run counter to what many religions have to say about how things work. And it may run counter to the beliefs many of us still hold on to. Some of us may have been so injured by the God-concept that was stuffed down our throats as youngsters that we just couldn't accept any form of "God," even One as loving and compassionate as this. Many of us could only loosely grab on to the Higher Power concept that the Program talks about, and maybe even then, could only look to our group as our Higher Power -- at least initially. That's fine. In one form or another, in one belief system or another, that's the way it works. It just looks different from various viewpoints, that's all. The important thing is that, slowly but surely, most of us could even say "God" without cringing. We could actually be comfortable with the concept of a spiritual, loving, compassionate, good-natured God. We became as God in our own right, heir to all that God is; divine, wondrous beings in Creation.

Now we could breathe easier and grasp just what God had in Mind for each of us: Joy, happiness, peace, compassion, beauty, abundance, health, and, above all, Love -- Love of ourselves, Love of our brothers and sisters, and Love of God. The more we really felt and believed and lived that, the further along the road to recovery we found ourselves.

READY TO WRITE?

New York Intergroup is looking for SCA members who would like to correspond with sex addicts who live too far from a meeting to attend.

For these isolated "loners," this may be their only regular contact with recovering sex addicts. For those of us in SCA who correspond with them, this Twelfth Step work can help strengthen our recover.

The New York Twelfth Step Committee is coordinating this effort in the Eastern United States, pursuant to the ISO initiative approved in February. We will provide some guidelines for letter writers.

We plan to ask pairs of SCA members to do this work, rather than "going it alone." If you want a letter-writing partner, we will pair you with one. As Hope and Recovery says: "We make a point of not going on Twelve Step calls alone because we don't want to place ourselves in situations that might set us up to act out again.

If you are interested in this work, please write to:

SCA 12-Step Committee
Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10113-0935

Editor's Note...(Cont'd from page 1)

the previous issue). I also thank the people in Chicago, Frank T. and Todd R. and Bob C. for their service in setting up publication and distribution. Let's give a hearty welcome to David A.S. of NYC (formerly Australia) who has been of invaluable service to me in editing the SCAnner, and John F. of NYC, 12-Step Committee and Web site coordinator, for all his input and service.

And if you haven't surfed the net recently (perhaps it's off-limits on your sex plan!) SCA now proudly has a website! We've already received requests from all around the world. The address of the SCA homepage is <http://www.sca-recovery.org/>, or you can e-mail us at info@sca-recovery.org. Thank you John F.

In this issue we have an excerpt from a new piece of literature based on the 14 Characteristics as our lead piece by Richard K. We have a report on last year's Northeast Inter-S Fellowship Conference in Albany by Michael H., as well as a report by yours truly on the semi-annual retreats sponsored by SCA-New York. See you next year!

Yours in recovery, Joe F., Editor

PEN PAL PROGRAM EXPANDS

By John F., NY-SCA

Our regular "pen pal" program has drawn interest from the Chicago Intergroup, and the New York Intergroup has already begun assigning correspondents to write to people who cannot attend a meeting. Many, but not all, of these "loners" are men in prison.

To protect those on both sides, we have established some suggested guidelines for participation:

- *No home addresses should be given; all mail is routed through local Intergroup or other Post Office boxes.*
- *SCA members write in pairs. We suggest that one person write the letter and the other read it over before it is mailed, although writing the letter together is also fine.*
- *Don't overdo it. Once a month is fine. If you alternate with your writing partner, that's one letter every two months for you.*
- *Be grounded before volunteering. We suggest at least six months on your Plan and one year in Program.*

We currently have a backlog of people who wish to receive letters. If you would like to participate, contact your local Intergroup or write to:

SCA ISO
P.O. Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 100111585

If you are interested in being a "pen pal" via e-mail with a person who can not attend a SCA meeting, please write to the "info" e-mail address at:

info@sca-recovery.org

Exultation is the going
Of an inland soul to sea,
Past the houses-past the headlands—
Into deep eternity—

Bred as we, among the mountains,
Can the sailor understand
The divine intoxication
Of the first league out from land?

Emily Dickinson