

SCA NEWSLETTER

January 1986

The SCA Newsletter is an informal means of communication between members from different groups, in different states or countries, and is especially intended as an outreach to loners. Any opinions expressed here are those of individual contributors, and publication in no way implies official recognition or endorsement. SCA has no official views concerning personal behavior.

LETTER FROM A LONER

In this excerpt from a letter to a member in New York City, Mac from Jacksonville, Florida shares personal experience, strength and hope with us. We welcome letters and hope to publish excerpts in each issue of the newsletter.

"Currently I am struggling with basically the first two steps of the program. It is my hope that I will 'come to believe that a power greater than myself will restore me to sanity.' For me this simply means that my wants regarding sex will be brought in line with my actual needs -- that my will shall be the same as God's will in this matter.

"When I stopped drinking I NEEDED complete abstinence more desperately than anything else in the world -- YET I WANTED a drink. This was complete insanity. I wanted the opposite of what



"And send me somebody tall, dark and handsome to do my fifth step with."

MASTURBATION: ONE MEMBER'S VIEWS

I needed. By removing my obsession to drink, God brought in line my want not to drink with my need not to drink, i.e. Want for Abstinence = Need for Abstinence = Sanity.

"I know that sex is not my greatest need today. Sex is merely my greatest want, and the way I like my sex is deadly for me... My most desperate need right now is abstinence... I've come to realize that during the last several weeks. My drive is mostly in my mind, not my physical body. Sure, I can become horny if I really think about sex long enough and fantasize hard enough. But the SCA program helps me stop this activity before it controls me -- if I let the program work.

"If your illness is like mine, it is telling you that the only possible way for you to get relief is to go have promiscuous sex -- and if you don't have it right now, you will stay depressed forever. There will never be anything worth living for from now on if you don't act out right now.

"However, will acting out really cure my depression? Will it really meet any of my needs? Will I feel worthwhile? Will I feel there is purpose to my life? Of course not. At this point I simply chant the Serenity Prayer, the third step prayer from the Big Book, page 63, call someone, go to a meeting.

"Depression hits me when I don't get my own way. When I don't have to have my own way I am no longer depressed. Nevertheless I hang on to my own will a really long time, until the pain is too great: then I let go."

I often used to say at meetings, "Masturbation seems to cut the urge to act out." It did exactly that. Masturbation was a tool that cut my desire to make contact with another person. Instead it redirected my sexual energy towards the person who had been my partner of longest standing and greatest availability: myself.

No wonder, then, that my isolation felt so total, and that I kept returning to the next stage of the cycle, which sought to push me back into the world into some kind of intimacy -- through physical sensation experienced with an anonymous person.

It took time, and lots of sharing, and actually another "bottom" for me to come to the understanding that masturbation suppressed so many feelings that it had in fact become a lock on the garden gate, keeping me in prison within the very compulsion from which I was using it to gain release. It was a bit like de-toxing a person from alcohol with Valium.

This understanding coincided with a new realization: the principal, deeper problem was not my sexual behavior, but my lack of awareness of my own internal spiritual richness. There is perfect health in me already. I did not know that as I fought my behavior head-on. There is a constant expansion in me towards health and joy. I could not accept this as I pushed to close down the sources of my sexual energy. The higher power is already present in me, and making contact with

it through prayer and meditation makes it unnecessary for me to seek this awareness in physical sensation.

This is not an appeal to some sort of religified, moralistic renunciation of sex! As spiritual healing occurs, compulsive behavior loses the power to turn my sexuality into a punch-press stamping out the same exact unsatisfying encounters, regardless of my feelings. Ironically, the release created by spiritual growth is also a release which intensifies real sexual desire, a desire for intimacy and the need to experience my great, good endowment in all parts of my life. Thus, spiritual growth becomes a potent antidote to the compartmentalization of sex which has plagued my existence.

It was only when I began to work more assiduously on spiritual healing that I was able to let go of the compulsive behavior which seemed to provide not only some degree of human warmth, but also an ersatz spiritual experience. It is good perhaps to remember that the psychologist Carl Jung suggested to the founder of AA that alcoholism could be understood as a low-level search for God.

I do not see myself as a besieged victim from whom some authority is attempting to wrest a valued possession. I see myself as a blossoming adult telling the child in him that it is time to let go of behaviors which have become destructive. It is necessary for me to assure that child that I am now capable of loving

CORE BELIEFS

A book admired by many SCA members, The Sexual Addiction, has been reissued by Compcare (2415 Annapolis Lane, Minneapolis, Minn. 55441) under the new title Out of the Shadows.

In it, author Patrick Carnes posits four "core beliefs" which he believes are shared by all sexually addicted people:

- 1) I am basically a bad, unworthy person;
- 2) No one would love me as I am;
- 3) My needs are never going to be met if I have to depend on others;
- 4) Sex is my most important need.

Carnes feels that an important part of therapy is changing these negative ideas and substituting four new core beliefs:

- 1) I am a worthwhile person deserving of pride;
- 2) I am loved and accepted by people who know me as I am;
- 3) My needs can be met by others if I let them know what I need;
- 4) Sex is but one expression of my need and care for others.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

These members in the New York area are willing to receive calls:

- Julio - (212)-244-3596
Bob - (212)-724-0053
Max - (718)-852-5323 (after 11 pm)
John - (212)-582-4392 (before noon)

child that I am now capable of loving and caring for him, and seeing that his needs are met. And it is only out of my spiritual sufficiency, my sense that I am in touch with the richness of the universe, that I am able to make this assurance. As I lose the need to grasp at compulsive behavior, I become free to take that child by the hand and walk into a different place.

John P.

WE NEED A NAME FOR THE NEWSLETTER

AA's newsletter is called The Grapevine, OA's is called Lifeline. Any suggestions for a name for our SCA newsletter will be gratefully considered.

DID SHAKESPEARE BELONG IN SCA?

If you think sexual compulsion is something new, read what Shakespeare had to say on the subject, some four hundred years ago:

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight;
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof,—and prov'd, a very woe;
Before, a joy propos'd; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

or after 10 pm -- leave message on tape at other times and he will return calls)

Expensive as a long-distance call might be, it's a wise investment if it spares you from the horrors of acting out.



IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER

SCA is growing so fast we can hardly keep track. We now have members in California, Florida, Ohio, London and Paris! We hope this newsletter will provide a means of communication between members everywhere. Please send your messages of experience, strength and hope to SCA Newsletter, c/o Reilly/Conklin, 133 West 71 Street, New York NY 10023.