

*theJournal*

Issue #219

Single Issue \$4

# FANTASY



## **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.

## CONFERENCE JOURNAL COMMITTEE (CJC)

The Conference Journal Committee (CJC) would love to have you fill one of our ongoing roles (outlined here - links within): <https://bit.ly/SLAAJournalTeam> Why not join our monthly meeting on the 4th Sunday to see what we are about. Request to join us. At [slaafws.org](http://slaafws.org), find our contact form under the service tab/conference committees/CJC journal committee <https://slaafws.org/committee/cjc/>

WRITE/ANSWER/PURCHASE/READ\*<sup>1</sup> *theJournal*, the "meeting in print" available 24 hours a day. Your new production team encourages everyone to subscribe for your own "hot off the press" 2 year print copy of *theJournal*. <https://slaafws.org/thejournal/>

\*<sup>1</sup>Older versions of *theJournal* are available online (some focused editions in our SLAAFWS Store, but newly published issues are delayed to give our valuable subscribers the opportunity to read their paid copies first.

F19.76 V19.76 £19.76 C19.76 \$19.76 F19.76 V19.76 £19.76 C19.76 \$19.76



# 1976 Campaign



SLAA was founded in 1976 with our 50th Anniversary in 2026.

**Costs are \$ 23,000\* per month to keep SLAA alive**

**Join your fellows and Sign Up for Monthly Contributions of 19.76 in your currency**

F19.76 V19.76 £19.76 C19.76 \$19.76 F19.76 V19.76 £19.76 C19.76 \$19.76

\*Average USD \$23,000 cost per month includes payroll for 3 full-time employees and 1 contractor, monthly lease payments, office equipment and security services, poolkeeper services, shipping costs, inventory orders for merchandise and literature, software services, utilities, and more. Visit [SLAAFWS.org/donate](http://SLAAFWS.org/donate)

**How Else Can I Be of Service?**

Contributions Via PayPal <a href="http://slaafws.org">@slaafws</a>	Contributions Via Venmo <a href="https://venmo.com/slaafws-official">@slaafws-official</a>	Share this flyer: meetings, intergroup, fellowship, sponsors, sponsees, etc.	Serve on a conference committee	Serve on a board/ committee (8-mp sobriety)	Serve on the Board of Trustees (3 yrs sobriety)
--	--	---	---------------------------------------	--	--







F19.76 V19.76 £19.76 C19.76 \$19.76 F19.76 V19.76 £19.76 C19.76 \$19.76

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous Preamble	10
The Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A.	11
Question of the Day	12
Crosswords puzzle & inspiration	16

## THEME: FANTASY

Finding Reality: Hope for the Newcomer	22
The Fantasy Inventory That Changed My Life	26
Welcome to Westworld: Live Without Limits	32

## SHARE SPACE

One Day, One Mantra	40
Beyond One	44
A Different Kind of Love	46
Shaken but Seen	48
S.L.A.A. Signs of Recovery	50

Motions adopted at the 1989, 1990, and 1991 Conferences chartered *theJournal*, but it is impractical for all of the content of a periodical, such as *theJournal* to be Conference-approved. Each recovery group can determine its own position on the use of content from *theJournal* at its meetings.

The Conference Journal Committee, a service body within Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, publishes *theJournal* for the good of the international S.L.A.A. membership. Oversight and policy is provided in accordance with the Ninth Tradition.

© March/April, 2026. The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved. ISSN: 3068-501X. Online: ISSN: 3068-5028.

Stories, interviews, personal testimony, and other content contained herein are authored by members of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous. The opinions expressed in *theJournal* are not necessarily the opinions of The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc., F.W.S. office, Annual Business Conference or any other Conference committee including the Conference Journal Committee or *theJournal* production staff. Motions adopted at the 1989, 1990, and 1991 Conferences chartered *theJournal*, but it is impractical for all of the content of a periodical such as *theJournal* to be Conference-approved. Each recovery group can determine its own position on the use of content from *theJournal* at its meetings.

In submitting such content to S.L.A.A., the member releases S.L.A.A., any other members of S.L.A.A. and S.L.A.A.'s officers, directors, employees and agents (collectively, the "Releasees") from any and all claims which the member may have against any of the Releasees in connection with the member's submission of content to *theJournal*.

The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc. 2411 NE Loop 410, Suite 122, San Antonio TX 78217, 1-210-828-7900 Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT except for holidays (fax) 1-210-828-7922. [www.slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org). For subscription concerns, please contact the SLAA FWS Office, as listed above.

Acting/Managing Editor, Joel S

Backup Editors: Melinda M, Nyla M

Editorial Assistant, Melinda M

Layout Editor/Art Director, Sarah A

Proofreaders for this issue: Nyla M

Special Thanks to Carole M (translations)

Special Thanks to our Audio Conversion Coordinator/Recording coordinator, Daniel G (translations)

## Letter from the Co-Editors and Production Staff:

Dear Readers,

For those who have contributed in the past and for those who contribute their time to *theJournal* by writing articles/questions, subscribing to the mailed copy of *theJournal*, reading articles from *theJournal*, and participating as new or long-term members of *theJournal* — we thank you.

The past couple of months here at *theJournal* have been a whirlwind as we have recently rotated our entire production staff (for the first time in over a decade). You may notice a few changes and some additional elements which enhance the familiar bi-monthly magazine, and more will continue to evolve as we adjust and strive to improve our “meeting in print.” As part of these changes, the production team has introduced an inspirational quote and a puzzle, both of which we hope will become regular features in future editions of *theJournal*. We hope these additions offer moments of reflection, engagement, and enjoyment for our readers. So, get out and subscribe to receive a paper copy — and tell 10 friends how to get it, too.

Sincerely,

Your newly rotated Production Team at *theJournal*

# **SEX AND LOVE ADDICTS ANONYMOUS PREAMBLE**

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition-oriented fellowship based on the model pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous.

The only qualification for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. S.L.A.A. is supported entirely through contributions of its membership, and is free to all who need it.

To counter the destructive consequences of sex and love addiction we draw on five major resources:

1. **Sobriety.** Our willingness to stop acting out in our own personal bottom-line addictive behavior on a daily basis.
2. **Sponsorship/Meetings.** Our capacity to reach out for the supportive fellowship within S.L.A.A.
3. **Steps.** Our practice of the Twelve Step program of recovery to achieve sexual and emotional sobriety.
4. **Service.** Our giving back to the S.L.A.A. community what we continue to freely receive.
5. **Spirituality.** Our developing a relationship with a Power greater than ourselves, which can guide and sustain us in recovery.

As a fellowship, S.L.A.A. is not affiliated with any other organizations, movements, or causes, either religious or secular.

We are, however, united in a common focus: dealing with our addictive sexual and emotional behavior. We find a common denominator in our obsessive/compulsive patterns which renders any personal differences of sexual or gender orientation irrelevant.

We need protect with special care the anonymity of every S.L.A.A. member. Additionally we try to avoid drawing undue attention to S.L.A.A. as a whole from the public media.

# THE 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.

The above version of the Twelve Steps was adapted from the Twelve Steps first published by Works Publishing Company in 1939. Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, New York, granted permission to Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous to reprint the above version in 1986. The forward of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., New York, 1952) states, "... the Twelve Steps can mean more than sobriety for problem drinkers." The fellowship of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous is grateful for the early contributions to recovery made by the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous through the gift of these twelve principles to the public in 1938.

## QUESTION OF THE DAY

& answers from yesterday

**In what ways has letting go of fantasy helped you grow in recovery?**

**How do you stay present and build real intimacy instead of escaping into fantasy?**

At first, I didn't see fantasy as part of my addictive behaviour. I was blinded by the white heat and disruption of my out-of-control sexual behaviours and couldn't see some things. After many years in S.L.A.A., I have begun to notice that I do identify with shares of others who identify as fantasy addicts. I wonder if the stillness created by my sobriety has allowed me to see beyond my sex and love addiction and see the role that fantasy played.

Fantasy—essentially insane thinking—played a number of roles in my addictive behaviour. It fuelled a narrative that I could only be saved by another who would love me unconditionally. Now I know that only my Higher Power loves me unconditionally. Fantasy also fuelled the grandiosity that I was a big deal



and deserved more than others—more money, more attention, more support, and the right not to follow all the rules. I've come to realize that I often viewed my acting out through a lens of fantasy. A fantasy that sex workers wanted to be with me and that they found me attractive or different from others. Fantasy led to so much wasted time in imagining conversations or adjusting actual conversations so that I could delude myself into thinking I was braver and more potent than I actually was.

Letting go of these fantasies has helped me grow in several ways. First, letting go of the fantasy of being rescued has energised me to work in unison with a higher power so that I take responsibility for my

growth, self-care, and well-being. My recovery is my responsibility. By letting go of my rescue fantasy, I no longer attract people who want to save me.

Second, I can now see the emptiness and essential loneliness of much of my sexual compulsivity. I've also found compassion for myself and others. Letting go of imaginary conversations has freed up time and allowed me to focus on doing estimable acts to build my self-esteem.

There are a number of tools that help me to stay present and build real intimacy. I use the Serenity Prayer in conjunction with the three-second rule to halt fantasy conversations. Meditation gets me in touch with what is really going on for me and brings me into my body. Outreach helps me burst the bubble of fantastical thinking. Sometimes I can pierce the bubble as I hear myself. More often, it's the thoughtful reflection or feedback from my outreach partners that does the job. Fantasy/anorexia was my first addiction.

As a very young child, I started disappearing into a world of fantasy. I hated my life; I hated myself. In my real world, I didn't feel safe or worthy of love, but in my fantasy, I could create a world where I felt both. I could also be the director of my life and feel like I belonged, instead of feeling utterly powerless and like an outsider looking in. It relieved a bit of the sadness, loneliness, shame, and fear I felt all the time.

Over the years, I added in more acting in and acting out behaviors, but fantasy was my overarching addiction.

I had long, ongoing relationships with different men in my head with complex storylines that were playing out in my mind even while I was with others. I was disconnected from God, self, and others in the real world, and barely functioning. When I came into recovery and people suggested stopping the fantasy, I was confused. I wondered what I think about then? My whole headspace was taken up with fantasy. When I stopped the fantasizing—along with compulsive sex with self—I had the worst

withdrawal I have ever experienced. But I had the gift of desperation as well, so I kept surrendering.

Slowly, I started to feel better, and the world started to open up to me, giving me different thoughts. I started to have a real connection with God, self, and others. I began to live in the real world instead of in my imagination. Today, I have been abstinent from fantasy and sex with self for over 20 years and feel present and connected in the real world. I have a daily recovery routine that keeps my head in recovery and the present without spinning off into a fantasy world. When I notice myself not being present, I practice mindfulness and being in the moment. I connect with and ask my HP to fill my mind and heart and to put me in the present world.

When I notice myself not being present with others, I bring my attention to my heart, visualize it opening, and see a light of love pouring out to envelop me. Then I can be fully present in each connection. I am deeply grateful for

this gift of recovery. It has changed my life in ways I never thought possible, and I am a different person today. I feel a deep sense of belonging. I feel worthy of love. I have learned how to give and receive love and have a real connection with God, self, and others. Today, my life is rich and full of so many gifts of recovery. Fantasy is a distant memory. I love my life today. I love me today.

— Sylvia G, Canberra, Australia

I'm going to attempt to answer this question from a different perspective or angle. From the perspective that all "fantasy" is NOT automatically a bad thing. I suppose that I've grown in recovery by exercising discernment of what sort of fantasy I hold onto and what I try to let go of. Doesn't fantasy have some sort of psychological and emotional benefit for us humans? But, like anything else, too much of a good thing can become a bad thing. One way in which fantasy has helped me in my recovery was with Step 2. In order to act my way into "coming to believe," I was supposed to get on my knees each day and talk to my Higher

Power. The challenge of this was that I was agnostic and didn't believe in God.

My sponsor explained that belief wasn't required to work Step 2, nor was he asking me to believe. He was asking me to do the physical action of prayer in spite of my disbelief. We come into the belief from somewhere else. He was asking me to "act as if." Act as if I believed. He was asking me to willingly suspend my disbelief.

What does all of this have to do with fantasy? I already knew that I was very good at willingly suspending my disbelief. I did this mental exercise all of the time already because I loved books, like Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, for example. I don't literally believe in hobbits or orcs or Mordor, but I react to the book as if I do believe in those things. Even though the book is fantasy, I believe that it contains truths. I learned something from reading *The Lord of the Rings*. Reading stories "exercises" my suspension of disbelief. This ability helped me to approach prayer and Step 2 in the same way. If it works for reading a story, why can't it

work for a Higher Power? Sometimes we have our own form of "recovery speak"—words that we associate with in a particular way in recovery rooms. "Fantasy" may be one of those words. I've found that holding onto some forms of fantasy can help my recovery progress, like my experience with Step 2 and coming into belief.

— Anonymous

Before getting into S.L.A.A., I didn't understand nor admit to myself how my use of pot to relax socially kept me from staying authentic and sober in relationships. Fantasy and intrigue fueled confusion about my reality and values. I have a relationship with my Higher Power now that allows me to feel unconditional love and acceptance, allowing me to be honest about who I am and what I'm feeling. This relationship with my Higher Power helps me build a trusting relationship with all aspects of myself. I don't need to ignore red flags or avoid clarifying questions and awkward conversations anymore. Great question! Thanks!!

— Mary, Davis, CA

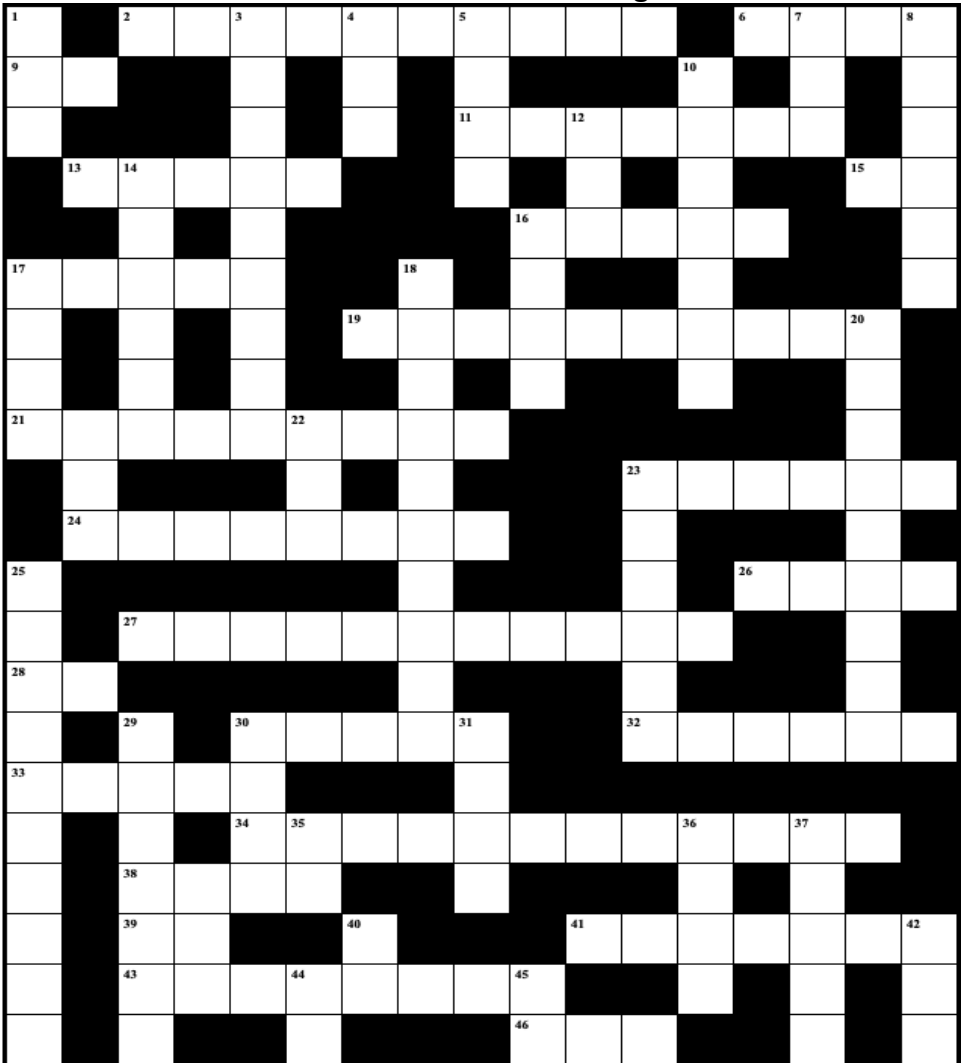
It makes me live in reality and helps me believe in the process. I stay present by talking to a woman that I am attracted to and getting to know

her. And I wait for the right time to talk about my interests and to find out if she is available to go out.

— Eddie

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE (Fantasy Issue)

-a new feature we have begun-



**ACROSS**

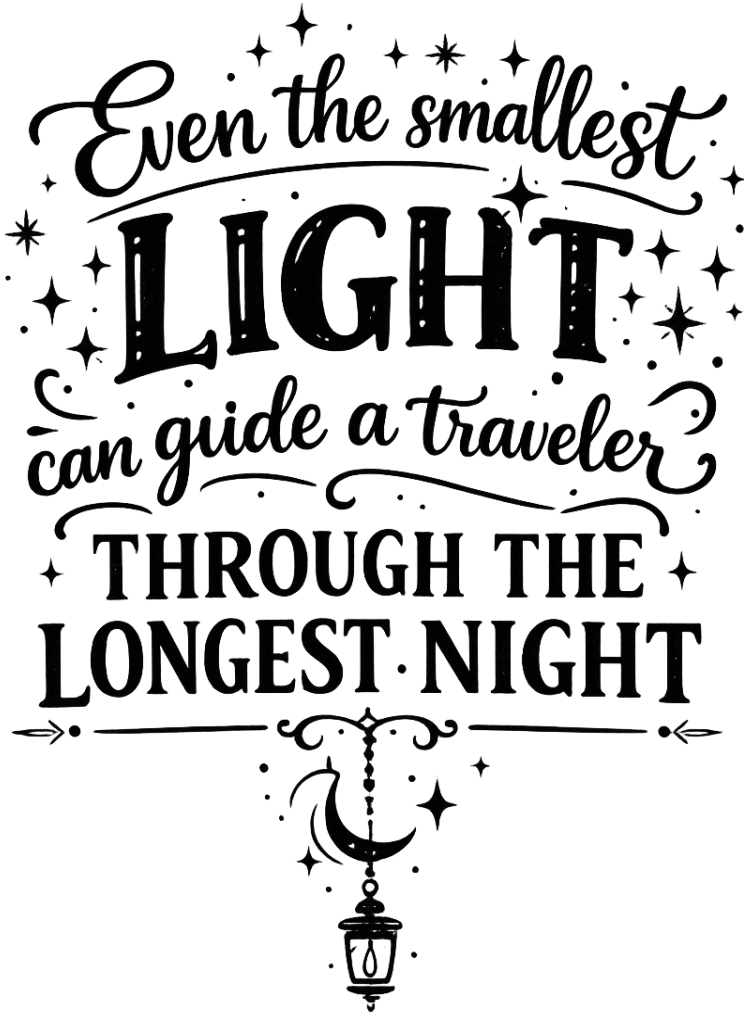
- 2. Embracing reality as it is; the foundation of recovery (10)
- 6. The opposite of fear and isolation in recovery (4)
- 9. Orientation in many SLAA LGBTQ groups (abbr.) (2)
- 11. Bravery to face reality and leave fantasy behind (7)
- 13. The painful emotion that keeps us hiding and isolated (5)
- 15. Regarding or in reference to (recovery abbreviation) (2)
- 16. Trust in a power greater than ourselves (Step 2) (5)
- 17. Deep anxiety and emotional turmoil in addiction (5)
- 19. The community and support of those in recovery together (10)
- 21. Letting go of control and trusting our Higher Power (9)
- 23. Conscious contact with Higher Power (Step 11) (6)
- 24. Peace from accepting what we cannot change (8)
- 26. The \_\_\_ requirement for membership is desire to stop (4)
- 27. The readiness to do what is necessary for recovery (11)
- 28. Prefix for twelve-step fellowships created to support the family members and friends of sex and love addicts as well as sex addicts (2)
- 30. What we confuse with addiction and obsession (plural) (5)
- 32. Going beyond healthy boundaries into harmful behavior (6)
- 33. Inner tranquility found through recovery principles (5)
- 34. Being genuine, real, and true to oneself (12)
- 38. \_\_\_ inventory daily (Step 10) (4)
- 39. Adult Child (recovery acronym) (2)
- 41. Positive moral qualities we develop in recovery (7)
- 43. Obsessive following or monitoring of another person (8)
- 46. Abbr. for a service structure or intergroup. Also, the domain suffix for the "slaafws" website (3)

**DOWN**

1. Abbr. for yearly meeting where delegates consider motions and elect the Board of Trustees (3)
3. Service body that shapes several aspects of the fellowship (comprised of members), which meets monthly (9)
4. Plan of Action (recovery acronym) (3)
5. "Keystone of the new and triumphant \_\_\_ through which we passed to freedom" (Big Book, p. 62) (4)
7. \_\_\_ day at a time (recovery slogan) (3)
8. Unhealthy entanglement in relationships, typically tied to families of origin (6)
10. Topic of this issue of the Journal. Immobilizing obsession in SLAA's 8th Characteristic of this identification (7)
12. Abbr. Country where SLAA was founded and has its offices (3)
14. \_\_\_ Power can restore us to sanity (Step 2) (6)
16. "\_\_\_ in love" (what SLAA members often did compulsively) (4)
17. \_\_\_ God to remove defects (Step 7 action) (4)
18. Heart-change prerequisite for true amends (Step 9 foundation) (10)
20. What we admitted we were over our addiction (Step 1) (9)
22. Prefix for literature which has not been approved by the annual conference, synonymous with not or without (3)
23. What we do with rigorous honesty in recovery (6)
25. Directly from p. 417, Big Book attitude toward unchangeables. Known as the answer to all my problems today (10)
29. Unreal scenarios that steal our lives and inhibit growth (7)
30. What the anonymity dike continued to do (Bill W. on Tradition 11) (4)
31. One of twelve principles in recovery programs (4)
35. "Our lives had become \_\_\_" (Step 1 key phrase, abbr.) Phrase Abbr. in recovery shorthand, notes, meeting formats, sponsor worksheets (2)
36. Abbr. for the Conference Healthy Relationship Committee (4)
37. What we learn to live in, replacing fantasy and lies (5)
40. Abbr. Northwestern European country where SLAA meetings are strong (2)
42. Sex Addicts Anonymous (sister fellowship) (3)
44. Abbr. for one of the larger West-Coast groups, which has a website and often has a representative Board member (2)
45. "To any length (willingness phrase in Big Book, Step prep)" (2)

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE  
(Fantasy Issue)

-a new feature we have begun-



## INTERNATIONAL RECOVERY CONVENTION 2026

In 2026, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous celebrates its 50th anniversary - fifty years of carrying the message of recovery to those struggling with sex and love addiction across the globe. To honor this significant occasion, the S.L.A.A. Ireland Intergroup and the S.L.A.A.

Greater Delaware Valley Intergroup are co-hosting the International Recovery Convention (IRC2026) on 21-23 August 2026.

This three-day gathering, filled with speakers and recovery-focused workshops, offers spiritual renewal, shared recovery, and fellowship across geographical and cultural boundaries. Members may participate:

- In Person: Castletown, County Laois, Ireland
- In Person: Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A., or
- Online: Via Virtual Livestream

S.L.A.A. Greater Delaware Valley Intergroup S.L.A.A. Ireland Intergroup The 50th-Anniversary IRC Co-Hosts.

Note: The 2026 Annual Business Conference/Meeting (ABC/M) is a business meeting held virtually August 6-9. The International Recovery Convention is a separate recovery-focused event being held August 21-23.

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous is a Twelve-Step, Twelve-Tradition-oriented fellowship based on the model pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous. S.L.A.A. is supported entirely through the voluntary contributions of its membership and is free to all who need it.

Geography Statement & Legal Stuff :The S.L.A.A. Ireland Intergroup serves the country of Ireland (Éire). The Greater Delaware Valley Intergroup of S.L.A.A. serves the United States region comprising Eastern Pennsylvania, Northern Virginia, Central and Southern New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. IRC2026 is a fiscally-sponsored project of Augustine Fellowship, GDVI, Inc. (US Charity 33-2377436).

For more information on the upcoming events related to the 50th anniversary festivities, see: <https://fifty.slaafws.org/>

The International Recovery Conference can be found here: <https://irc.slaafws.org/>



## *50 Years of S.L.A.A.*

*Hosted by the Ireland Intergroup of S.L.A.A. and  
the Greater Delaware Valley Intergroup of S.L.A.A.*

**21-23 August 2026**

### **Three Participation Options**

*Baltimore, Maryland, USA*

*Castletown, Laois, Ireland*

*Hybrid Livestream*



**<https://irc.slaafws.org>**

## FINDING REALITY: HOPE FOR THE NEWCOMER

**F**inding reality seems like such a simple thing to do, yet when faced with it for the first time in recovery, the thought often becomes overwhelming.

The first time I surrendered to the fact of my addiction and walked into an S.L.A.A. room for the first time, I had absolutely no control of the desperate thoughts running through my head, which were fear and trepidation over what the people would think of me. I felt eyes piercing through me, exposing my darkest secrets. I was just sure everyone knew the things I had done.

As my mind cleared enough to move my feet and take a seat in the room, a few people greeted me, telling me that I belonged there as they offered me the basic newcomer packet. I was sure they were judging me. I knew there was a reason I was there, but even though everyone I cared about had told me I needed help, I couldn't for the life of me understand WHY!



Was I really so different from everyone else? Why did I need help when so many others had done the same things I had done? I knew from talking with my wife that pornography played a part in the script of my life, as well as how I was acting around girls at our church. Since I had never had any physical relations with anyone outside of a



hug, I was certain that nothing had been inappropriate. Back in the S.L.A.A. meeting, the beginning-of-meeting rituals were over, and I began to listen intently to the speaker share. The subject matter was good, but I never connected with the speaker, since the share didn't relate to my issues. As time passed, stories, Step studies, shares, and

workshops helped me to understand the nature of my addiction to sex and love, but nothing quite connected with me. Finding and working with a sponsor helped me determine that my core issue was unhealthy, addictive fantasy, though even that knowledge didn't resonate with me for a long time. I spent many hours and days going through the Steps. I didn't really know why I did certain things in my life. I hadn't learned yet about my issues as a child suffering sexual abuse, so I really was lost with a hard roadblock to my recovery. I learned that I didn't have a clue how to do amends properly, and in that process learned the importance of Steps Six and Seven. Staying involved through service within S.L.A.A. kept me invested in my recovery, but my growth was sporadic, to say the least. Slips happened, and my sobriety dates changed on a routine basis. Fellowship developed with others in my home group, and strong accountability partners helped me "white knuckle" my recovery for the next few years.

Nearing 10 years in the program, I hadn't given much more thought to fantasy as a drug. Then, within four months, two events happened that finally started me on a solid recovery path. First, my brother told me the story of how he ran into a woman who was a childhood playmate of mine. She told him that as an older child, she had been teaching the younger neighborhood boys what to do with girls. This conversation immediately flashed me back to when I was nine years old, and I recalled instantly what went on in my garage all those years ago. Sexuality and sensuality for which my nine-year-old mind was not ready.

Second, a few months later, I was invited to a fantasy-focused S.L.A.A. meeting. In the course of that meeting, the pieces of the puzzle started to finally coalesce. Fantasy was a vehicle, but it was also the drug that I sought as I acted out over the next 65 or more years. So, now I know the cause and effect of my addiction. But what can I do about it? Except for a few mentions about fantasy in the basic text, there were no materials within Sex and Love

Addicts Anonymous that addressed an addiction to fantasy. In the course of fantasy-focused S.L.A.A. meetings, I started to learn about the recovery tools and wisdom of other fantasy addicts like me. For example, one tool is the "fantasy inventory." In this exercise, I imagine and list three things that the object of my fantasy hates, fears, and wants. In doing so, I am reminded that I often have little idea what the other person really feels. It helps me become aware of the ways I project my own feelings onto those I fantasize about.

I also practice guided meditation to overcome fantasy. Meditations like the beginner and advanced meditations on overcoming fantasy addiction help me isolate specific parts of my body that are affected when I am in fantasy and understand how inauthentic and disquieting my "play-acting" in fantasy can really be. Meditative breathing techniques help clear and quiet my mind and restore balance to my spirit. Practicing mindfulness is another way to counter the hold fantasy can have on me. When I'm objectifying or fantasizing about someone, usually a

stranger, I can pause and take a second look. I look for details that humanize the person and allow me to break the fantasy and reclaim my brain. For example, perhaps the person has dark circles under their eyes and appears tired, or maybe a scarf they are wearing matches their coat. Still, learning all those tools has not completely solved my impulse toward fantasy. I am still a fantasy addict, and my addictive behaviors are always available to me at a moment's notice when I feel grief, pain, or loss, no matter how much recovery I have. What S.L.A.A.'s fantasy meetings do more than anything is to teach me how to be a fantasy addict in recovery. I have learned that my addiction is not a problem to be solved. It is a compulsion to be observed and outlasted.

I have learned that it is by inches, not miles, that I stay sober. I find community and acceptance spending an hour or two in an S.L.A.A. meeting and sharing, reading recovery literature, being a sponsor, praying and meditating, being of service on S.L.A.A.

committees, and most of all, just making progress each day and forgiving myself when my recovery is not perfect.

In the end, it is the meetings themselves—spending time with other fantasy addicts like me, rather than any epiphany that I learn in those meetings—that gives me the strength to make progress against my addiction and stay present in reality every day. One of my program outreach partners taught me the phrase: "Your strength is my strength." The fact that we come together and listen to each other and share helps me know I am not alone. And that I never was.

— Anonymous Fantasy Addict



## **THE FANTASY INVENTORY THAT CHANGED MY LIFE**

**Content Warning:** This piece includes themes of violence. Recovery is our priority; please read with self-care in mind.



In the “S.L.A.A. Study Guide for Fantasy Addicts,” under step 5, there’s an important question that gets to the heart of my fantasy addiction: “Would you be willing to share the exact nature of your addictive fantasies with another

person?” Would I? For years, I wasn’t able to tell anyone what I fantasized about. It was too embarrassing. This question felt like a huge challenge. Could I really confess my fantasies to another person and to God? Would I be able to tell someone about my

sexual fantasies or the ones in which I would do horrible things? Or the ones in which I would save people? Or the ones in which I was brave and brilliant? I had to get honest with myself. Would I be able to share my stash of stories, which I had been using for years to disassociate from reality? Would I be willing to share the most private and secret storylines that kept me enslaved to the addiction?

All the fantasies I've had are embarrassing. They're not something I am willing to share freely and openly—and yet, I know that the only way to sober up is to speak them aloud, as suggested in step 5.

It took me four weeks to finally admit to a particular fantasy I had kept secret for years. This one still brings me lots of shame. Like a good addict, I wanted to keep it a secret forever. The truth is that I was terrified to speak it out loud because I feared it could put me in actual danger.

Today I am sharing this fantasy with you because saying it aloud helped me not just because I spoke it out loud to a group of trusted fellows (an important part of step 5), but because after sharing and inventory of the fantasy, my life took a turn for

the better. In my fantasy, I go to the home of my ex-husband (who left me for another woman). His two daughters, ages 13 and 15, are present. I use a weapon to murder the two girls, and then I take my own life. I leave him alive to live with the pain of losing his daughters for the rest of his life. It is a difficult fantasy to share; I was scared that someone might want to put me in jail. And yet, the moment I shared it—with fantasy addicts I trust—I felt relieved. They did not judge me; they listened. I proceeded to inventory it. I asked God to help me see through it. I asked these questions: Where was I when I was 13 years old, and where was I when I was 15 years old? Why was this particular fantasy so full of rage?

In elementary school, I had attended an all-girls campus. When I entered high school, there were boys around me for the first time. I was 13 years old. My father had been sexually inappropriate with me, following me around and spying on me regularly. I never had privacy; I was not even allowed to shut the door of my bedroom. He also touched and talked to me as if I were his property - he even spoke of selling me for a profit. He also hit me and assaulted me verbally and emotionally regularly. When I was 15 years old, I started to

feel useless because my father told me that I should learn to type instead of pursuing my vision of becoming an actress. I hated typing. He told me that being an actress wouldn't happen to me and that I needed to get a job as a receptionist or secretary to survive. The underlying message, the one that I absorbed, was that my life was not worth anything. I shouldn't try to pursue a dream or a career I wanted. I was not good.

I was shocked when I got to this part of the inventory because I realized that I wanted to kill the 13-year-old me who couldn't handle being around boys because they meant abuse. I wanted to kill the 15-year-old me because I thought she did not have the right to exist, she was completely useless, and she could only aspire to take a job I would not like. I was a secretary for 30 years, just like my father said. I had abandoned all my dreams, thinking I was not worth anything else. The man (my ex in the fantasy, and my father in the inventory) was the one I wanted to spare after I killed his two daughters. I wanted my father to suffer because even though I had been his little princess and adored daughter when I was very young, the moment I started developing into a

woman, he diminished and abused me in every way. If I had died at 13, or 15, he would have suffered for the rest of his life. If I had died, he would have remembered that he'd loved me. If I had died, he would have regretted the way he'd treated me. When I shared this inventory with my fellows, they all had the same reaction: deep compassion, shock, and even tears.

The inventory was powerful; it pointed me to the original wound behind it. But the interesting part is that my healing didn't end there. Right after sharing the exact nature of my fantasies with fellows, God came into my life in an unexpected way. While still working as a secretary, I had studied yoga for years. Eventually I became a teacher, but I never thought I could make a living from it. I became a seasoned yoga teacher during my recovery, but it was only a side job.

During the week of the inventory, I took a yoga class at the gym. At the end of the class, the teacher said, "I want you to know that I see you, how courageous you are. I want you to know that all your dreams will come true this year; you are a visionary, powerful person." He could see me! I existed! And I had value! A deep male

voice was suddenly saying the words that I wish my father had said when I was a teenager. This was God at work. When I got home, I lay on the floor and cried. My belly was shaking uncontrollably as I sobbed. In yoga, we consider the area of the belly to be the third chakra, which has to do with my sense of worth and my personal power, especially when I align my will with that of God's.

From that moment on, I recognized how amazing I am as a woman in the world—as a sponsor, a fellow, a friend, and a teacher. This is not something I say lightly. I now feel it within my soul. The conviction of my worth has become embodied within me; I have no doubt I am valuable. I see it when I practice Step 12 and help a newcomer. I see the relief in my sponsees' faces when they begin to

heal as we inventory fantasies together. I have an enormous amount of value to offer. Not just within the program, but in my private life and career as well. I see proof of it in the

changes in my yoga clients—changes I might have ignored before. I now see where and how I add value to others and how God wants to use my talents in the program and for a living.

Fantasies are not to be dismissed as just fantasies; they are not just stories we take refuge in; they are valuable opportunities to

heal. Especially if we are willing to share them with a person we can trust and God, as per step 5.

Every fantasy is a Shakespearean saga—there are heroes, villains, obstacles, and transformations. All of these may not be in one single fantasy, but when I put all my favorite fantasies together, the characters

“

**FANTASIES ARE NOT JUST STORIES WE TAKE REFUGE IN; THEY ARE VALUABLE OPPORTUNITIES TO HEAL. THE CONVICTION OF MY WORTH HAS BECOME EMBODIED WITHIN ME; I HAVE NO DOUBT I AM VALUABLE.**

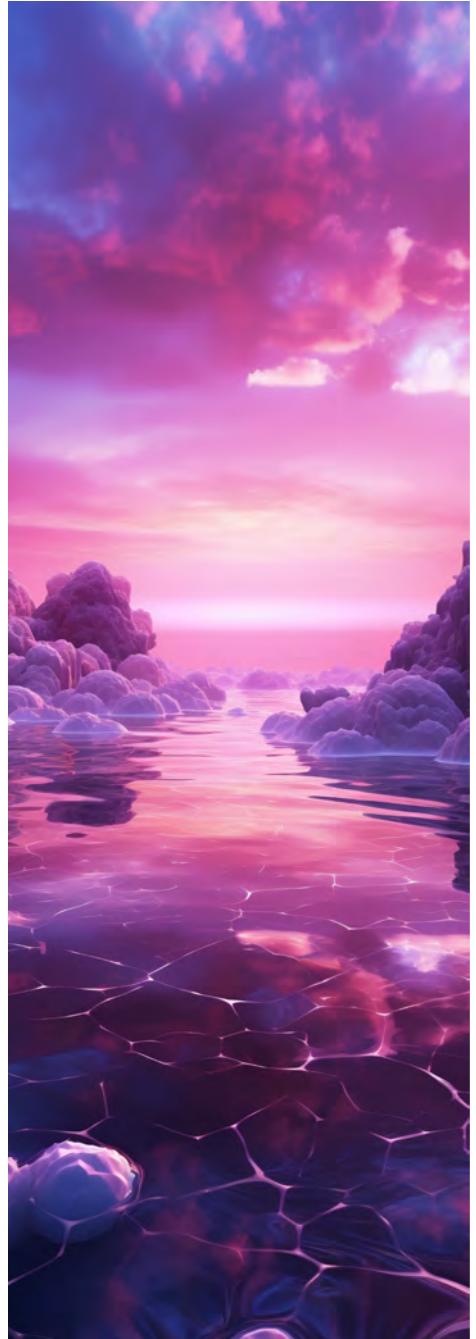
”

come to life; they are all there, and each character is a part of me.

The way in which I interact with myself within the fantasies informs me of the wounds I need to perform psychological surgery on, so that I can have a psychic change. All fantasies hold the key to recovery; they are a treasure because we can use the addictive story lines we used as a drug to heal. Whenever you speak of one of your fantasies, think of all the characters, places, and things within it. They are all aspects of you. Who are you in each role? Inventory it. Look at the fantasy as if it were a movie you had to analyze and then share it with a person you trust in S.L.A.A. This is the way the program works, and with this work comes the promise of sanity, recovery, and a great life.

Each fantasy is sacred, and I have to tell you that inventorying this one changed my life forever.

— Anonymous S.L.A.A. member





## **WELCOME TO WESTWORLD: LIVE WITHOUT LIMITS**

**H**ave you ever watched the 2016 series remake of the 1973 film *Westworld* (WW)? It's a psychological and philosophical sci-fi, dystopian drama set almost exclusively within a futuristic high-tech theme park where very realistic

fantasy fulfillment is the main attraction. Almost anything goes in WW (trigger warning: The film contains quite graphic nudity and sexual scenes\*\*).

On one level, WW is about the evolution of consciousness in humans. On another level, it is about human behaviour. On still another level, it's about the exploration and discovery of the deeper self, the journey of awakening. All of the show's themes capture me.

However, in early S.L.A.A. recovery (for the second time), I was drawn to rewatch WW and this time around enjoyed it through a particular lens. I embraced WW when it was first released because I love when a well-crafted sci-fi portrays a possible and plausible future based on our present collective social complexities and existentialist zeitgeist. I was drawn to it at this time in my life because of the resonance that has stayed with me: It echoes a kind of allegorical mirror of my current situation, of mounting awareness of my sex and love addiction, and of my recovery, too.

In the series, visitors enter the WW theme park via a train, figuratively travelling back in time and literally arriving at a reconstructed setting of the American frontier, the Wild West

stage of the nation's evolution. As they disembark from the train to this fantastical world, a vibrant throng of other guests and "hosts" meets the visitors. In WW, hosts are artificial humanoids that are generally indistinguishable from the humans they have been built to emulate. Essentially, visitors can do whatever they wish to the hosts without any reprisal of any kind; anything goes.

In the opening scene of the first episode of the series, the diagnostic engineer asks, "What do you think of the guests?"

A host gives her scripted and pre-programmed response: "The newcomers are just looking for the same thing we are...a place to be free, to stake out our dreams, a place with unlimited possibilities."

Immediately, the woman in a newly arrived couple says, "Oh, God, it's incredible." "Better be for what we're paying," responds the male half. This opening scene pointed right at my sex and love addiction. It pointed right at me.

I, too, had always been looking for a place to be free, with unlimited possibilities. Although I could not have known way back then, at the laying of the foundations of my very own personal Westworld, what I'd end up paying. I'm paying off that debt now, making reparations to myself and perhaps even to the world. A host asked a visitor, "Have you ever questioned the nature of your reality?" This host had begun to develop human-like consciousness, and she was seeking revenge on the humans for their treatment of all the hosts. "Did you ever stop to wonder about your actions...the price you'd have to pay if there was a reckoning? That reckoning is here."

A marketing grab line in one of WW's promotional clips primes the curious seeker: "Welcome to Westworld: Live without Limits." The phrase offers guests ultimate permissibility in a seductive, nonchalant manner from the immaculate temptress presenter. This very much captures the intoxicating allure that the world of acting out on my sex and love addiction has had for me. My personal limits were many, varied,

and deeply entrenched. The world I've inhabited for the greater part of my life has been a dream-like WW theme park experience. Most of the people and settings I have encountered in my life—and most certainly in the realms of sex and love—since my creation of and entry to my own personal WW at around eight years of age have been projections of acts, actors, theatrical sets, all playthings for my chemically addicted, addled brain. Wherever I am, I am primed for fantasy based on a predetermined blueprint that either seeks soothing, or the bolstering of my aching, hollow sense of self. It's like I've been wearing Augmented Reality Glasses (ARGs) ever since I can remember. Sometimes others have gone along with me; sometimes they haven't. I suspect the ones who went along with it were also wearing ARGs.

The only significant difference between my story and that of the television production is that instead of entering a theme park as they did in WW, I crossed a threshold in my brain, from one of being relatively divine-centred (although I can't

really recall how that was, it was so long ago and fogged by turmoil and trauma) to not-divine-centred. Instead of engaging with seemingly unconscious non-sentient high-tech AI-people, I did so with other sentient beings—actual people.

Just like the many deplorables that enter Westworld for its depraved possibilities, as well as the well-meaning conventionals seeking an escape, I did not see my real-life ‘hosts’ as human, but as objects for the sole benefit of my defective being. Not malevolently, of course, but I knew no other way to be. It has not been predominantly conscious; I’m not a psychopath, nor even a sociopath. My programming was hijacked by a primal part of myself for survival in my childhood and adolescent development, as a means to override my faulty systems of emotional, physical, and spiritual regulation. Back then, at that pivotal time of foundational construction of my neurology and my “self,” I didn’t have the internal and external resources to do much else. I had very distorted cognition and required extreme measures of protection in

the form of chemically charged aids. I believe the wiring for functional fantasy, as well as sex and love, is built into our human DNA and is very susceptible to dysfunctional hijacking. Nevertheless, I have hurt or harmed many people and myself; I have lied, cheated, manipulated, schemed, and deemed others as accessories to my schemas built on my lack of wholeness.

The unofficial promotional script for WW goes something like this: Come and seek adventure in simulated dangerous and heroic narratives... escape into the wondrous haze of other times... be who you wish you could be... flirt, romance, sexualise, brutalise, assault, rape, pillage, kill...one can seemingly do as one pleases in WW without the guilt of actual real human, social, or legal consequences. This is the modus operandi of WW. And, of course, this is a fictional television series. But these things are sometimes the motivating desires of my chemical and addictively overwhelmed small self—they reside in my dark hole of despair where the flow of the divine is designed to be.

On first entering Westworld, to the unindoctrinated eye, it is a regular, fully functioning society of people seeking to manifest all sorts of personal desires and motivations, just like in the so-called real world. But to my sex and love-addicted automaton's mind's eye, it's as though I'm wearing those ARGs, and the mechanics and machinations of WW's development unit are prominent and overlaying the so-called real world, guiding and driving me.

Even just watching Westworld on my screen sends my dopamine levels on a rollercoaster ride, edging into every part of me, to each extremity of my body. From my brain, where my personal WW was built, the rollercoaster carriage surges ahead seeking a grand destination. The dopamine carriage yearns for its climax and destination, the end of the ride. If it doesn't get there, the carriage finds its way to my divine-shaped hole and sits there in a chemical limbo, waiting for satisfaction. Alternatively, and ideally, a spiritual agent or divine light would meet and appease it.

However, that's not how it goes when I'm captive to my personal WW.

If I could observe myself throughout my life from an omniscient eye in the sky—especially in the areas of sex, love, and relationships - it would appear that my actions were conducted as though other people were not real, just like the hosts of Westworld. I would be an automaton, oblivious to the humanity of others. Whether it was dating, relationships, masturbation, sex workers, porn, intrigue, scanning in the streets, validation or approval-seeking emotional anorexia, I was not fully there, and neither was anyone else. I could not see others as they truly were. There's a strong sense that this has been because of an inability for genuine, intimate connection to myself or others.

"This is the only place in the world where you get to see people for who they really are," says a company leader and WW convert to his father-in-law and head of the company. In WW, the premise is made that visitors see who they really are through the opportunity of acting on

unbridled desires in a simulated, but nonetheless emotionally real, world. They are representatives of a corporation, however, seeking to invest in WW to collect visitor data to collate the truest of marketing potential consumers, to see the undisguised and unadulterated nature of people. I have seen who I really am—both the engulfing dark parts and the beckoning light—in the depths of my enslavement, under the emotional stressors of my nervous system caught in a simulated survival mode. I got glimpses of who I wanted to be, and I have had to continue to choose, for living my life this way became increasingly untenable. Unlivable.

A central thematic and narrative arc of WW is the motif of the maze. The maze is a hidden talisman that a veteran park guest with viscous tendencies pursues for its promise of revealing WW's prized, elusive meaning. The maze, I believe, essentially represents the journey to self-awareness and consciousness. In journeying and searching outside of himself for this ultimate meaning, he returns to himself. He also

discovers his true goal in WW— for the theme park to give meaning to his life. Searching for all the remedies outside of myself has been a trap, an eternal loop of hell.

Many religions describe hell-like concepts as places of immense eternal suffering. However, some of us believe this to be more of a state of being than a physical destination. Most significantly, though, being in hell isolates me from any divine contact and influence. It is not permanent; cracks do appear. By the grace of enough of those cracks appearing, I see the reality of my circumstances more clearly, together with the pain and despair of personal crises, and again, I surrender.

The WW metaphor is especially resonant for me now, because I have been able to admit the incredible reality of my relationship to sex and love addiction, with humility. I can also admit to the harm I mete out because of my addiction. It is, at its essence, primarily to avoid feeling and acceptance of myself. It is also about being separated from something greater, that universal life

force that I call the divine. I wasn't able to comprehend that until recently; certainly not enough to overcome my sex and love addiction. I've got to be willing to journey within, to go to those darker, shadowy spaces in myself. I know I never need to revisit my personal Westworld, nor the myriads of WW-like rides that are omnipresent in our world to explore my out-of-reach places. That has certainly been part of my journey until now, and it's served a purpose in bringing me closer to self.

In one of the great WW reveals between the park's co-creator, Dr. Robert Ford, and his humanoid host helper and 2IC, Bernard (spoiler alert warning), another moment of poignant pointedness reveals itself to me: "Do you know why I really gave you the backstory of your son [dying], Bernard? It was Arnold's key insight, the thing that led the hosts to their awakening. Suffering. The pain that the world is not as you want it to be." But, alas, suffering was not enough on its own. Dr. Robert Ford: "You needed time. Time to understand your enemy. To become stronger than them. And I'm afraid in order to

escape this place you will need to suffer...more."

Because I have repeatedly followed that little voice from the cracks, I have discovered the emptiness within me that yearns to be inhabited by my authentic self. After taking those destructive paths that lead to false idols, I have stumbled upon the centre of my maze. That's a great place to start.

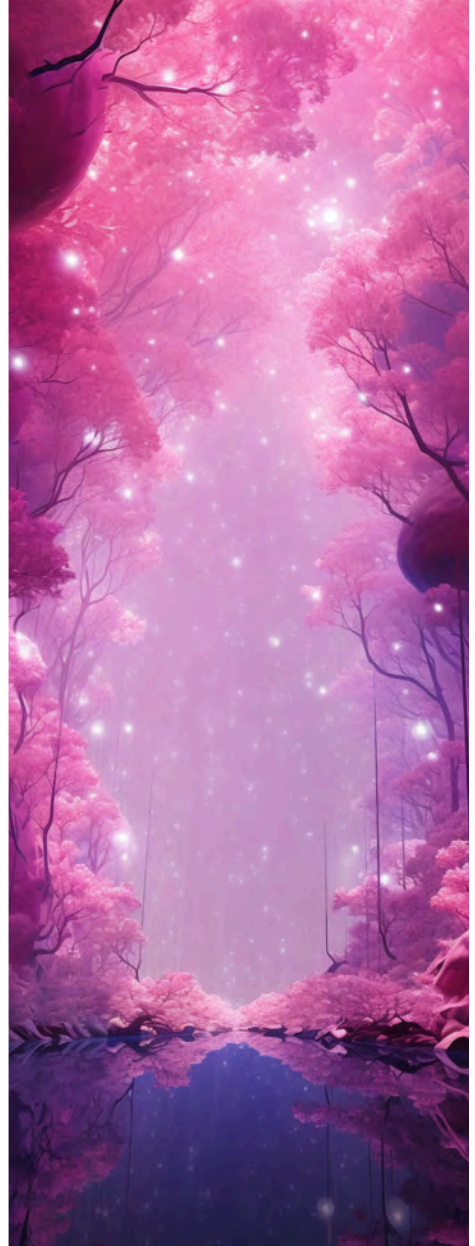
It's the continuing search that's key for me, even when I have made mistake after mistake, over and over. Evolution itself is successful and has led us here to our current state of development based on correcting mistakes (called "mutation"). New variants emerge from previous mistakes. Yet it is only through bringing more awareness to myself—becoming more conscious—that I arrive at new and improved variants of myself. And this 12-Step program of S.L.A.A., because of its focus on self-awareness and spiritual core, provides the support, structure, and tools to assist me on my journey to self-healing and wholeness.

The Higher Power force, or miracle, that guided many addicts into recovery from rock bottom is called the grace of God by some and “the energy of the universe” by others. It resides deep in me. Even when I’m in the pit of hell, in times of crisis (an essential stage of the recovery process for me), I experience moments of grace when the crack appears. That force reveals a way out of hell, and out of the theme park. I clear the historical wreckage in me—the layers of beliefs and blockages, the walls and defences, the psychological pollution—that has suffocated that force to make space for it to grow and thrive.

— Written by Andrew D (no A.I. was used in the creation of this writing).

\*\*Admittedly, the initial nudity and sex scenes were a bit disturbing to me at first, as porn is a bottom-line behaviour for me, which I am abstinent from, and visual sexual stimuli is risky territory. Grateful for outreach phone calls at times like these. And continuing with the show anyhow has been a continual

practice of recentering and a process of desensitisation.



# SHARE SPACE



## ONE DAY, ONE MANTRA

This is just a poem I wrote one day while thinking about my SLAA journey:

Before I found SLAA, I was living a double life I had the stuff I did for me and the stuff I did to avoid strife.

The attention was something I was missing, something I craved.

The internet provided all of it in spades.

It started innocently enough, a chat, a stream, a sub.

But the intention was never really pure, it was the chase I was after, it was the cure.

A cure for loneliness, for needs left unmet, I loved one person, but it was not enough.

The spark I found with random strangers was enthralling at first.

It felt like I was committing a crime; it was such a rush.



I remember when I sent my first sext, "it's make-believe, it's not actual sex," was the lie I told myself over and over.

Besides, what she didn't know wouldn't hurt her. The addiction started so small that I could end it with no effort at all.

Yet, I didn't because I felt I deserved it, someone saw in me something exciting. I might not have been their exact type, but the kinks we shared gave the match a light.

I thought I was keeping it all on the down low. I was super careful, so no one would know I kept separate email accounts, and I logged out whenever I was not around. I left nothing to chance with my fooling around.

But after a while, I got sloppy and lazy. The addiction made my self-aware vision all hazy.

I ignored the red flags I was waving, believing the whole time that my phony self was unwavering.

There was no stopping the train; it

was running out of tracks at a speed that was insane.

Eventually, my partner called me out, "Tell me what you're doing or I'm kicking you out."

I froze, not sure what to do. I knew this day would come, but all I thought about was playing dumb.

"What are you saying? What do you mean? They're just my friends, there is nothing to deem."

Fireworks flew, cursing abounded. My partner was hurt beyond all known bounds.

All I could do was sit there and stare, watching them cry in despair.

Minutes felt like hours, hours like days, as I waited my final destination. Would I be spared or given the end of the relationship?

It turns out they gave me another chance, and I found S.L.A.A. by happenstance.

At first, I was nervous, scared, and

shy, didn't turn on my camera, I didn't even say "Hi."

But hearing the stories of those in the group, my courage started to take root.

"My name is Steve, I am an addict." This is my first time sharing and starting to work on it.

Recovery, that is, something I don't deserve, but still I am being told "you've been heard."

Realizing that I was no longer alone, I started to feel more like I was home.

Everyone's story all slightly different, yet I could relate to everyone's instance.

Of addiction and shame, we all look different, but all feel the same.

We wanted to give ourselves up to a higher power, even if it means "hour by hour."

As I grew within the groups and meetings, I started to find a new way of feeling.

I wanted to sit in my anguish and pain; I didn't want to run away from the pain.

And painful it was realizing what I've done, to myself, my family, to everyone.

Even strangers were not unaffected as I gazed upon them with selfish reflections.

Intrigue, fantasy, and obsession were my tools, which I used as my main weapons to lure people into my web of deceit, devouring their energy as a way to meet.

My uncontrollable lust for the flesh, I was so addicted I couldn't even give it a rest.

One day at a time, was my new mantra, so silly it seems, but soon it has got ya.

Saying it over and over, like a warm friend throwing their arm over your shoulder.

Service came next, giving back what I freely received.

Nervous at first, but then came with ease.

I found that the more I had given, the more I received from those who were stricken with the disease I had learned was a part of myself, but this time I had the tools with which I could help.

Others feel welcomed, loved, and secure. We do not judge, we strive to endure.

Being there for others to help find the cure.

I don't know where I would be without this little programLost and alone with no hand to hold on.

Thankful for each and every one of you. Continue this message to those who are new.

Together we can support and defeat This affliction that we are striving to beat.

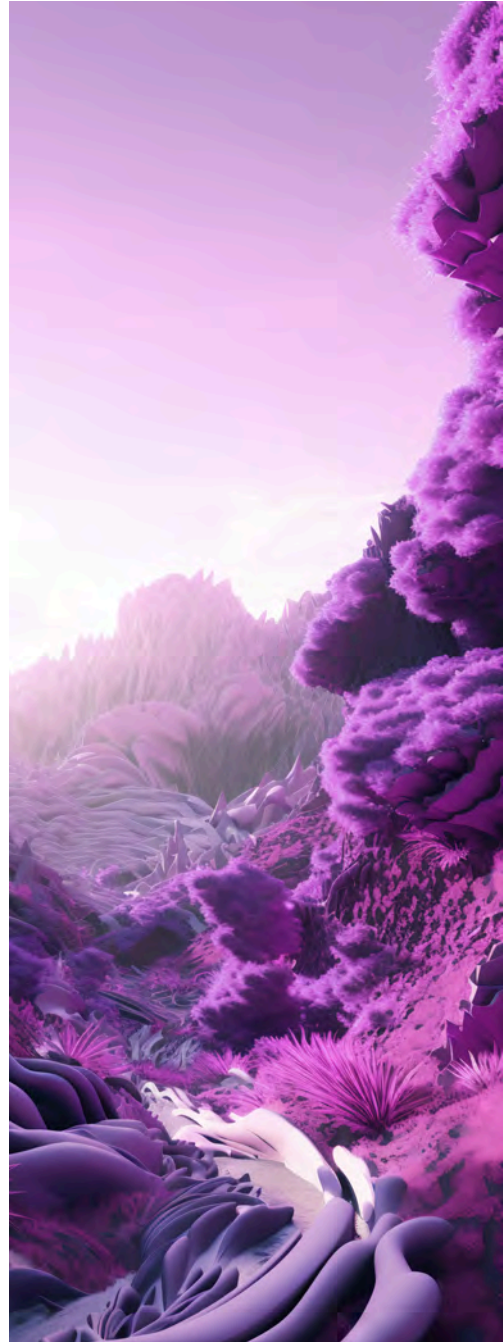
—Steve B, Massachusetts, USA

# BEYOND ONE

“Je ne suis plus jamais seule. Mais comme je suis malade, je peux l’oublier.” Cette phrase prononcée par ma marraine dans le cadre d’une de nos séances de travail hebdomadaires pourrait résumer mon expérience dans le programme de rétablissement D.A.S.A.

Je suis arrivée dans D.A.S.A. il y a presque un an, après avoir observé une énième fois (la fois de trop?) les mêmes comportements destructeurs dans mes relations. Il s’agissait de relations amicales et familiales mais si elles avaient été romantiques ou professionnelles, ça aurait été la même chose. C’est mon lien à l’autre qui est malade, quels que soient les domaines de ma vie. Je ne pouvais plus ignorer la confusion et la manipulation dans mes liens humains.

Mon engagement dans les réunions, la littérature et très vite la rencontre avec ma marraine m’ont guidée vers plus de clarté, plus de légèreté et surtout plus de sérénité.



Bien sûr, le chemin ne s'arrête pas là, chaque avancée est célébrée et chaque chute est une occasion de se relever. J'y mets du cœur et je ne suis pas seule, et ça change tout: la vie est moins douloureuse et plus joyeuse. J'apprends d'autres manières d'être en relation et c'est à la fois délicieux et précieux.

— Coralie, 30 ans, dans D.A.S.A.  
depuis 11 mois.

English Translation:

I'm never alone anymore — but when I'm struggling, I lose sight of that." These words, shared by my sponsor during one of our weekly sessions, sum up what the D.A.S.A. recovery program has meant to me.

I joined D.A.S.A. almost a year ago, after observing the same destructive behaviors in my relationships for the umpteenth time (one time too many?). These were friendships and family relationships, but if they had been romantic or professional relationships, it would have been the same thing. It is my connection to others that is sick, regardless of the

area of my life.

I could no longer ignore the confusion and manipulation in my human relationships. My commitment to meetings, the literature, and, very quickly, meeting my sponsor guided me toward greater clarity, lightness, and above all, serenity. Of course, the journey doesn't end there. Every step forward is celebrated, and every fall is an opportunity to get back up. I put my heart into it, and above all, I am not alone, and that changes everything: life is less painful and, above all, more joyful. I am relearning other ways of relating to others, and it is both delightful and precious.

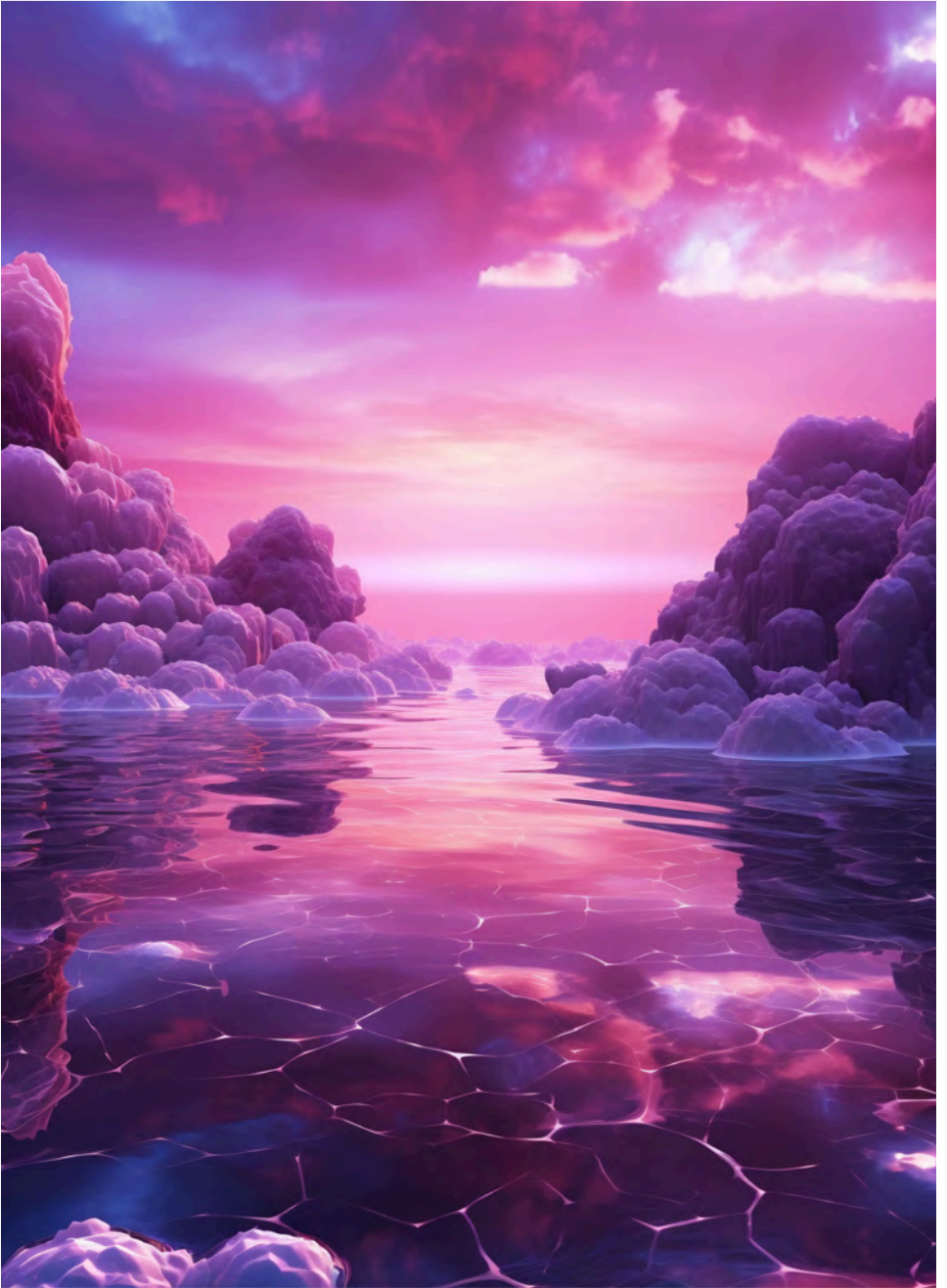
## A DIFFERENT KIND OF LOVE

Se reconstruire ? Je travaille le programme D.A.S.A. depuis 2 ans 1/2, 3 réunions par semaines, des appels à des ami-e-s des fraternités régulièrement, lectures et marrainage. Je me sens très soutenue depuis j'ai un filet de sécurité sous moi. Aujourd'hui je sors de mon anorexie amoureuse, j'envisage la possibilité d'une nouvelle relation.

J'étais repartie dans une relation que j'avais diabolisé. J'ai encore tendance au phénomène "d'obsession romantique", mais je sais interagir et utiliser les outils du programme pour ne pas rester "scotcher". Mes relations de façon générale se sont améliorées. Je suis à la fois plus tolérante, et plus capable de m'affirmer tranquillement et de poursuivre – ou de construire – ce qui est bon pour moi.

— Anonymous

English Translation: Rebuilding myself? I've been working the D.A.S.A. program for two and a half years, attending three meetings a week, calling friends from the fellowship very regularly, reading, and receiving guidance from my sponsor. I feel very supported; I have a safety net beneath me in case I need it. Today, I'm recovering from my love addiction, and I'm considering the possibility of a new relationship. I had run away from a previous relationship, demonizing the other person and being afraid of them. I still tend to experience "romantic obsession," but I know how to interact with it better and use the program's tools to avoid getting stuck in it. My relationships in general have improved. I am both more tolerant and also better able to assert myself calmly and pursue what is good for me (or build it if necessary).



## SHAKEN BUT SEEN



Quand je suis arrivée à Montréal des Etats-Unis, j'étais anéantie. Je n'arrivais pas à me faire des amis, j'avais dépensé tout mon argent pour retrouver ma relation qualifiante (encore un échec) et j'étais émotionnellement vidée. J'ai trouvé D.A.S.A./S.L.A.A. après huit mois et Je me suis reconstruit une vie.

Récemment, j'ai vécu un autre déménagement qui m'a chamboulée. Cela a entraîné une rechute et fais réaliser que je devais faire face à mes problèmes de codépendance. Ca prend tout le courage du monde pour le reconnaître mais quelle chance de me voir honnêtement!

— Kelly-Joy, Montréal, Canada



English Translation: When I arrived in Montreal from the United States, I was devastated. I couldn't make friends, I had spent all my money trying to salvage my relationship (another failure), and I was emotionally drained. I found D.A.S.A./ S.L.A.A. after eight months and slowly began to rebuild my life.

Recently, I went through another move that shook me up, led to a relapse, and made me realize I needed to address my codependency issues. It takes all the courage in the world to admit this, but what a blessing to be able to see myself honestly!

## **S.L.A.A 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.



# JOIN A CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

## MONTHLY MEETINGS ONE HOUR/MO.



- **Anorexia (CAC)**

Carries the message to the S.L.A.A. community that sexual, social, and emotional anorexia can be an inherent part of sex and love addiction and encourages integrating this idea into all areas of the Fellowship and its literature.

**4th Sunday @ 1:00 PM Central (CT)**

- **Bylaws (CBC)**

Responsible for maintaining and updating the current S.L.A.A. By-Laws, in cooperation with the BOT. It acts in an advisory capacity to the BOT, Fellowship-Wide Services, and the Conference with regard to potential or requested By-Law changes. The Committee also works with the BOT to facilitate changes to the By-Laws passed in accordance with Article XIV of the By-Laws.

**3rd Sunday @ 5:30 PM Central (CT)**

- **Charter (CCC)**

Responsible for the planning and facilitation of the ABC/M in cooperation with the BOT and F.W.S. (In the absence of a CCC, the BOT and F.W.S. are responsible for running the ABC/M.) Creates the ABM Agenda, chairs the ABC/M, and is liaison for the entire Conference to the BOT and F.W.S.

[90 minutes] - **1st Friday @ 7:00 PM Central (CT)**

- **Diversity (CDC)**

Carries the S.L.A.A. message to broader groups of people around the world.

**2nd Saturday @ 3:00 PM Central (CT)**

- **Fantasy (CFaC)**

Works to meet the increased demand for literature and S.L.A.A. meetings focused on the role fantasy plays in sex and love addiction. It also explores the creation of study groups, events, and retreats for the addict that struggles with fantasy as part of their sex and love addiction.

**4th Saturday @ 5:00 PM Eastern (ET)**

- **Finance (CFC)**

Allocates funds to the committees based on requests and available funds to increase financial support from groups, intergroups, and other sources.

**3rd Wednesday @ 5:30 PM Berlin (CET)**

- **Healthy Relationships (CHRC)**

Responsible for the development and implementation of resources and tools that enhance our recovery as sex and love addicts by increasing our capacity for building and sustaining healthy relationships of all types.


**3rd Sunday @ 9:00 PM Universal Time (UTC)/ \*4:00 PM Central (CT) \*Mar-Oct**



- **Journal (CJC)**

Creates the monthly/bi-monthly "meeting in print" magazine focusing on S.L.A.A. recovery and related issues. Works w/BOT & F.W.S. for publication.

**4th Sunday @ 10:00 PM Universal Time (UTC)/ \*5:00 PM Central (CT) \*Mar-Oct**

*for the most updated info:*

 (meeting links) <https://cc.slaafws.org/>

  <https://slaafws.org/conference-committees/>

# JOIN A CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

## MONTHLY MEETINGS ONE HOUR/MO.



- **Literature (CLC)**

Fosters quality literature in support of S.L.A.A. recovery; guides the planning, writing, and editing of literature from writers, writing groups, or service bodies. Approves draft literature prior to submission for full Conference approval.

**[90 minutes] - 4th Saturday @ 11:00 AM Central (CT)**

- **Member Retention (CMRC)**

Responsible for the development and implementation of tools and methods to retain members. We encourage long-term members to commit to our cherished tradition of service. By members' commitment to service as a spiritual principle, we retain their collected shared wisdom, experience, strength, and hope in all areas in S.L.A.A. Our message is heard by newcomers and inspires those who are stepping up for service. We are the committee behind long-term members staying in our program of recovery.

**2nd Sunday @ 7:00 PM Central (CT)**

- **Public Information (CPIC)**

Carries the S.L.A.A. message by: working with national & international service entities, intergroups, & local groups to convey S.L.A.A. information to the potential members & their supporters; providing materials to help members carry the S.L.A.A. message; and supporting service bodies to do outreach at intergroup & group levels.

**1st Sunday @ 8:00 PM Universal Time (UTC)/ \*3:00 PM Central (CT) \*Mar-Oct**

- **Service (CSC)**

Carries the message of sobriety through service by attracting, educating, and unifying members to be of service, giving back to the S.L.A.A. community what we continue to freely receive.

**2nd Sunday @ 12:00 PM Central (CT)**

- **Sponsorship (CSpC)**

Dedicated to promoting recovery by drawing on the tool of sponsorship. Our goal is to make sponsorship accessible and rewarding to sponsors and sponsees in the fellowship of S.L.A.A.

**3rd Thursday @ 5:00 PM Central (CT)**

- **Steps, Traditions, and Concepts (CSTCC)**

Promotes the study, understanding, and application of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts throughout the S.L.A.A. fellowship.

**4th Sunday @ 2:00 PM Central (CT)**



- **Translation and Intergroups Outreach (CTIOC)**

Responsible for providing support to International S.L.A.A. Intergroups and/or groups to carry the message of recovery to the suffering sex and love addict in their own language.

**4th Sunday @ 3:00 PM Universal Time (UTC)/ \*10:00 AM Central (CT) \*Mar-Oct**

***for the most updated info:***

 **(meeting links) <https://cc.slaafws.org/>**

  **<https://slaafws.org/conference-committees/>**

