

SCA DC NEWSLETTER

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By SCA Metro DC Intergroup

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My Story

By Craig B.

Hi. My name is Craig. I have been a member of SCA for 8 years. I was born to a military family in 1957. My mother was an alcoholic/prescription drug addict and my father was a sex addict. I believe my father knew I was going to be gay. He was a total agnostic, ex-catholic. Hindsight being 20/20, he took his own self loathing for his homosexuality out on me at every turn. I was asthmatic due to both my parents' smoking behavior. By the time I was 8, I began turning into a man. I remember my first orgasm vividly. I escaped the smoke filled rooms of my family home to retreat to my bedroom where I masturbated in fear and resentment, filling my fantasies with the ideas of the masculine men of my mind.

I married at 21, to my eating disordered wife in 1978. By accident, I found the acting out places in college and spent many hours in the building where it occurred, watching the men going in and out of the bathroom. Once, a man exposed himself to me at the bulletin board across from the classroom where I was studying calculus. By 1982, I had moved with my wife to Charlottesville. I stopped going to college and started a career with McDonalds and I climbed up the ranks quickly. It was in the fall of 1982 that I found more acting out at the local University and I watched it for a year. Finally, I gave in and tried it out and I was hooked. I spent less and less time at home, while my wife grew at times larger and at other times smaller as she was hiding her Bulimia from me. By October, 1984, we were divorced. The day the divorce was final, I was preparing to open a brand new McDonalds in the mall in Va. Beach, where I had moved. I acted out all night long, spending the last few hours talking unaware to an undercover policeman. I touched his leg and bam, I was in the police station throwing up. I was fingerprinted, charged and let go. Within hours I was dressed and opening the brand new McDonalds without a hitch. My life was totally compartmentalized.

In 1985, I started going to therapy to try and change my sexual orientation. That failed. It was court ordered. My wife had by that time entered eating disordered inpatient care and she asked me to go to an Adult Children of Alcoholics meeting. I agreed. When I told my acting out story at the meeting, the woman next to me told me her father was the chair of SA. I went to my first meeting of SA in 1985 and continued for almost 2 years. It did not work for me.

My first lover that I found was an alcoholic in the Navy. Our relationship lasted 3 years, during which I acted out many times. I was arrested again, in a Mall. He was angry, but supportive of my second court date, community, service, and \$1,000 fine. In 1987 I went to Co-Dependency treatment and I worked steps 1-5 for my ACOA issues. I came out as a Sexual Compulsive at that time. During treatment, I set boundaries for my recovery, one of which was to not put up with my partner's alcoholism. He started going to AA. I left McDonalds and I moved to the Western part of Virginia. Around that time, my partner and I agreed to separate and work on our recovery issues separately. I worked for a prison as a Food Service director and went to Al-Anon meetings when I met my second lover.

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What if I Have Multiple Addictions?

At our recent DC-SCA spring conference, a group of us met during one of the breakout sessions to discuss multiple addictions. Many of us find that in addition to being sexually compulsive, we are addicted to romance, various chemical substances, debting and overeating. What's more, sometimes it seems that just as one addiction seems to be "in retreat" another comes to the fore, with the usual powerlessness and unmanageability.

Here are some of the attributes we found that all of our addictions have in common:

- **Escape.** We try to temporarily flee from our reality by retreating into a fantasy world, fueled by our addictions.
- **Pain relief.** We medicate uncomfortable, unfamiliar feelings with addictive behavior. Sometimes, when we stop acting out, the unpleasant feelings rise to the surface, which puts us in danger of returning to our "drug of choice."
- **Trance.** While under the influence of our addictions, we become zombies, compulsively engaging in destructive behaviors not in keeping with our values.
- Our rational mind is powerless to stop the addictive behavior/thoughts.

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NEWS

One tool that can help one's recovery is to participate in **DC SCA's Blog site**. Members have found this site as a way to remain connected while at work and between meetings. If you are interested in becoming a member of the blog site, email dcscablog@verizon.net.

Twenty people have signed up for the SCA Retreat this Fall. We are now starting a waiting list. If you would like to be put in the list, please call Craig B. If any of the registrants cannot go on the retreat, Craig will contact you.

Please contact your editor, Rod F. at roddiver@verizon.net, if you would like to share your story or contribute in other ways to the DC SCA newsletter.

My Story continued

My employer found out that I was gay and I was forced to leave my prison job so I went back to McDonalds. Oh, the sense of humor of my higher power. I got fired again when they found out I was GAY. By that time, I had stopped going to meetings and had started acting out at rest areas, bookstores and such. I worked at a Children's Mental Health facility and re-started College. I split up with my second lover and lived with roommates here and there. I went to work at Wendy's for a while, but ran out of money and stopped going back to school. I was depressed. I started cleaning bathrooms for a friend's parents' company. I found I could clean public bathrooms and act out too.

In the late 80's I started traveling to DC to act out. I met another lover at a bar and, over time, I moved from Western VA to Northern VA in 1996. I continued to clean a few houses with my lover and spent the rest of the time acting out in places where I couldn't get arrested. While in this relationship, I met a third guy online and fell deeply in love. It all ended in disaster. In January of 1998, I went to my first SCA meeting in DC and met my sponsor of 8 years and started this program. I went to the out patient Sexual Addiction Treatment center in DC, through Whitman Walker and went to individual therapy for a few years. I separated from my ex in 1999. I continued to live with him when I met another person online in 2000 and he moved here to start a relationship. I was going to meetings, but slowly started to slide.

I was also deeply involved in the BEAR Movement for 9 years, created the Bear Pride Flag and was selling merchandise on the weekends at Bear Events all over the US. I realized that my LOVE Addiction was being fueled by going to those events. The relationship that I was in ended exactly the same as the first disaster from online. It was at that time that I realized I wasn't just a Sex Addict- I was a Love Addict as well. I started going to 5 meetings a week, SCA and SLAA meetings and started working the steps for both SEX and LOVE Addiction. I lived in my car for a few months. I stopped going to Bear events in 2002. I lived alone for over 3 years. I put my energy into expanding my home and office cleaning business and it grew 5 fold in 3 years.

Today, life is very different. I can afford to live by myself. I eat better. I read literature, use the phone, participate in the intergroup of SCA and I continue to work the steps, practice the slogans, and have developed some great sponsee relationships over the years. I have become more financially responsible. I have a tremendously fulfilling relationship with a Higher Power that helps me differentiate the difference between my SEX and LOVE Addiction and my HOMOSEXUAL ORIENTATION. I'm very comfortable being GAY. I am dating a person in recovery and I am continually challenged by intimacy issues. I have learned to face the rampant FEAR that I felt growing up in my Family of Origin. My Higher Power continually prods me to ASK FOR HELP!. I have evolved away from my need to practice perfectionism, instead making a choice toward decisions that lead to serenity. I get to be imperfect and practice this program of progress. I have learned to let go of dysfunctional relationships with people where I cannot get my needs met. With that, I'll close here. Thanks for letting me share.

Multiple Addictions continued

- We indulge in addictive behavior even when we don't feel like it.
- We start "playing with fire" and engage in brinksmanship.
- We think we need some person/substance/experience to complete/satisfy us.
- We experience difficulty in turning to prayer and meditation.
- We seek out instant gratification.
- We look for ways to justify our behavior.
- We resist using the tools and steps of the Program to help us let go of our addictions.

The solution:

One thing that's sometimes mentioned in 12-Step meetings is that our drug of choice is only mentioned in the first step of any program: "We admitted we were powerless over (name of addiction) -- that our lives had become unmanageable." After that comes the process of turning to a Higher Power (steps 2 & 3), then taking inventory and asking H.P. to remove our shortcomings (steps 4-7). Finally, there's daily inventory, practicing prayer & meditation and carrying the message (steps 10-12). In other words, the problem may be multi-faceted, but there's only one solution: working the Steps.

Although the wording of the Steps are virtually identical in any 12-Step program, many of the tools used are different. For example, in D.A. and O.A. there are tools involving the recording of spending and eating, which then result in the formulation of a plan. The specifics are different from the tool of a sexual recovery plan in SCA, but the idea is the same. Some tools are nearly universal in all programs: attending meetings, using the telephone (and now e-mail), service, sponsorship, literature and the slogans.

One member in our workshop said he is grateful to be able to share with other SCA members his struggles with multiple addictions, both at meetings and one-on-one. SCA provides a safe environment where we can truly be ourselves, "warts and all" as we work toward our common goal of letting go of addictive, self-destructive behavior. Together, we can help each other reach the "spiritual awakening" mentioned in the 12th step, as well as to experience the Promises.