

SCA DC NEWSLETTER

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By SCA Metro DC Intergroup

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My Story

By Chris S.

I grew up lonely and isolated in a family with 4 brothers in a very small town. I was different than everybody around me. I craved attention and when a couple of older neighborhood kids started to sexually abuse me, I found myself accepting it and often wanting it and encouraging it. These events occurred frequently over many years and eventually came to be combined with the discovery of my Father's and Grandfather's porn collections. My life as a young boy had become completely sexualized.

In Junior High School, I began seeking out sexual situations with others always looking for that 'high' that was achieved by the planning, potential, and ultimately the conquest. In the absence of physical contact with another person, masturbation became my best friend and frequency increased to up to 6 or 7 times a day. My sexual behavior was starting to get out of control and would define the next 25 years of my life.

Although I had a strong attraction to men, I refused to identify with being gay and had a succession of girlfriends eventually culminating in a marriage to a woman I met in college. Being in relationships or marriage did not stop my behavior of seeking high risk and anonymous sexual encounters. I waited for the days when I could be alone to cruise the parks and other spots I knew would likely result in some kind of sexual encounter. A difficult pregnancy that my wife endured gave me opportunities to act out. I stayed overnight at a stranger's house and had unprotected sex the night my wife gave. I always needed the fix and fooled myself by believing that I could be successful living in both worlds.

The stress of living in the world of sex addiction and being a closeted gay man took their toll and I left the marriage shortly after the birth of our daughter. Loneliness and depression gave me reasons to continue and increase my risky behavior. Bookstores, gay bars, bathrooms, and well known public places for sex became my new obsession. I tried very hard to maintain the euphoria that came with meeting someone for sex, but crashed hard after every encounter. I couldn't figure out why I couldn't stop, why I couldn't just settle down with someone nice and live a normal life. *continued on page 2*

The Recovery Plan

By Doug P.

Doesn't it seem redundant to work the 12 steps yet have a "recovery plan" in addition? I wonder how many have asked that question. SCA differs from other 12 step programs in that we are remodeling an integral part of our nature - how we value and use sex in our lives. Our sexual self is natural, good and pure in its God-given form. We have abused this nature, and allowed our compulsive and unhealthy behaviors to run amok. Our path is to relearn healthy expressions of our sexual being.

Because recovery demands rigorous honesty and being specific about our behaviors, and each of us has different issues with specific behaviors, the sexual recovery plan is a personal, written contract that states what sexual behavior we will or will not allow ourselves. It serves as a foundation for clarifying and validating our step work as we advance through the program and gives us focus in recovery.

We strongly encourage written recovery plans. Early in recovery, many may balk at what seems to be a repressive structure in their lives (the plan), but it is a lack of structure that allows the demon of denial and rationalization to run free. A written plan, developed with a sponsor, clarifies our recovery intent, helps us avoid fantasy and romanticism in our goals, and serves as a contract with ourselves (the contract aspect is most useful when a sponsor is used). Honesty begets accountability; if we are unwilling to be accountable, then we are also unwilling to be honest. The recovery plan brings us from idle talk or stressful confusion to real commitment and action. Many who have resisted developing a recovery plan eventually realized that they have not yet committed themselves to their own recovery, or perhaps were fuzzy about just what they were trying to recover from (a good indication to revisit Step 1). *continued on page 2*

SCA NEWS & EVENTS

Be part of DC SCA's online recovery support group. Email DC-SCA-News@googlegroups.com to join.

Please contact your editors, Rod F., Jim S., or Doug P., if you would like to share your story or contribute in other ways to the DC SCA newsletter.

My Story continued

I made it through my 20's and 30's convincing myself that I was a better person when I was in a relationship. It gave me reason to focus and a place to throw my energy, but looking back now, I was never able to maintain the monogamous contract that came with every relationship. There was even a short time while I was working as an executive for a company near my hometown that I took a job working in a massage parlor. It paid well and I developed a regular list of clients who would come in just to 'get off', but what really drove the need was my addict. This gave me another chance to be sexual with complete strangers, something always new, always different and being paid in the process. I was a prostitute fueled by my need for sex. What didn't seem to matter were the risks involved. Being caught by the authorities, my coworkers, my family was not enough. The possibility of physical violence, disease, and shame wasn't enough either. Through it all I maintained a high level of respect as a successful executive, a loving father, and best friend to everyone, but what I didn't have was self-respect or true intimacy. Sex for me was a replacement for intimacy. I realized not too long ago that everyone I considered a good friend of mine throughout my life were people that I had had sex with at some point. Sex and friendship had become synonymous.

I moved from one relationship into another, desperately wanting them to work but never knowing how to be a good partner, to give of myself, to be honest and sincere and loving. My addict always got in the way ready to replace the loneliness, hurt, stress, frustration, and any other emotion that was inconvenient at the time. I needed the fix, the shot of adrenaline that came with doing something forbidden and wrong. As with all addictions, my needs progressed as my senses dulled with each experience. I was always searching for the next experience that would satiate my need, always disappointed and left feeling empty.

Discovery for me was in November of 2006. I was in a very important meeting at work when I took a call from my partner who wanted to know immediately why I was actively looking for sex over the internet. I was caught and I didn't have an answer for him. Reality was smacking me in the forehead and in an instant it became clear that my life was indeed totally out of control. The discovery by my partner last November saved my life. It gave me the first opportunity to examine my character defects, understand what it was that had happened, and how to begin looking at a future with healthy relationships and friendships. The beginning of my life may not have started out so well, but I now know those experiences don't have to dictate how the rest of my life ends up. I can still be a successful and productive member of society. I have work to do, but am happily up to the challenge of showing myself that one can overcome some pretty big obstacles in achieving the goal of sobriety.

Recovery Plan continued

Some literature calls for the development of a recovery plan as a step 4/5 process; however, we in this area find it useful and almost critical to develop a simple plan in conjunction with step 1 work. It serves, along with step 1, to first identify just what it is we are trying to lick. Initially, the "don't do's" are important. As we work the plan, we begin to add the "do" behaviors that will fill the void in our hearts and lead to healthy and full living. Our structure for the plan is simple:

1. Bottom lines: we state what we will not do and may include any behavior that puts us in legal or physical jeopardy, or is generally destroying our lives. Many of us define our sobriety as "not crossing our bottom lines."

2. Middle lines: these are what we call gray areas, behaviors we do not prohibit, but thoughts and/or behaviors that could be risky or stimulating in non-healthy ways. For example, some people list using pornography as a bottom line, some list it as a gray area. Masturbation may be a bottom line, while for some masturbation per se is not but certain fantasies and thoughts during masturbation may be bottom line. It differs for all. The importance of the middle lines is that when we obsess on middle line behavior or thinking we are likely headed for trouble, and need to figure out why we spend so much time in this area. This is to say that **any patterns of obsessive** sexual thought or behavior are unhealthy, because the healthy human mind and body is a balanced soul.

3. Top lines: these are the healthy, spiritually-based behaviors that advance our experience of life in every positive way. Many of us found these to be both difficult to identify and do. Recovery is all about getting to the top lines and minimizing bottom line and gray experiences in our lives. Examples include daily prayer, exercise, service in SCA fellowship, delivering on family responsibilities, etc.

How does it work? We are honest and seek support when we break our bottom lines (slips or relapses); share our gray areas and seek clarification and self knowledge regarding them; celebrate our top line achievements.

The keys: sponsor – personal commitment – written plan – adapt as you grow and work the steps.