

# SCA DC NEWSLETTER

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By SCA Metro DC Intergroup

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## My Story

*By Bill G.*

I have been powerless over many things in my life, including my alcoholism, bipolar disorder, and two different types of cancer. However, it was intimacy problems, sexual addiction and compulsiveness, as well as major co-dependent traits/behaviors that caused me to drop in at my first SCA meeting in March 2008.

I had attended SLAA meetings briefly when, after over thirteen years of continuous sobriety in AA, I finally decided to get serious about my recovery in that program. At that point, I was what Patrick Carnes had described as a Level I sex addict. I failed to pursue that opportunity, and sought individual therapy and returned to SA in 2000 – I actually stayed about two years, but couldn't quite stay sexually sober as defined in that program. As my life was again getting chaotic earlier this year, I took in an SCA meeting: I immediately compared in when I heard the 20 Questions and the 16 Characteristics – I was definitely in the right place.

My story begins with masturbation as my first inkling of a budding sexuality. This progressed to getting available pornography (friend's father's "Playboy") in my teens. Further desire for porn led me to get some more via mail delivered to the fraternity house address – a beginning of a secret life. I did not understand until much later in life I wasn't just attracted to the women in the black and white photographs, but also to the men with their erections.

My first sexual experience (other than with myself and in my fantasies) was with a young woman I had known in high school and met again in college. We wound up eventually going to bed together. I think I remember everything she ever told to me and what we did together in the next three months. Having turned 21 earlier in year, it just didn't get any better than that: her scotch, my beer and having sex with each other as often as she would let me. Only problem was that I almost flunked out of school that term. We broke up after she advised that I loved her more than she loved me, and we shouldn't see each other for a while...of

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## Shame, Guilt & Grandiosity

*By Craig B.*

Through therapy and years in recovery, I have come to know that guilt is something I feel when I "do" something wrong. With the help of the steps, I can work my way out of guilt by admitting that I'm wrong and taking action to rectify the situation. I can call a person to apologize, find ways to counteract a not-very-sensitive act, or deal with my guilty feelings through prayer and meditation. I can act on the guilt, rather than be consumed by it, with the help of my Higher Power.

Now shame is a whole different story. I feel shame not because I've done something wrong, but because I "am" wrong, and there's no possibility of making things OK, so I wallow in that feeling (who can correct a worthless person?) and seek escape rather than action.

Looking back on my life I can see that my shame is based on two core issues, or things about me. The first, which brought me to these rooms originally, is being ashamed of pursuing anonymous sex and emotionally toxic relationships. Today I accept the fact that I will always have these impulses—I am powerless. This acceptance has brought me closer to understanding and knowing "who I am." My shame loses its power, and as a recovering sex and love addict in these rooms, I see parts of myself reflected in some really wonderful people.

The deeper issue of shame has come from admitting and accepting that I am a gay person. It came about because of my reaction to other people's condemnation of my being gay—a father who mocked my "sensitive" side, the religious community, my peers, even my close friends. Today, by accepting the fact that I am gay and casting the shame aside, I shift the focus away from what people think of me—a co-dependent reaction to other people's responses—and look inward to affirm and love the part of me that is gay.

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## SCA NEWS & EVENTS

This bi-monthly newsletter is one of the many ways DC SCA Intergroup serves the local SCA community. Doug P, Rod F, and Sidney L are the editors for the newsletter. Please let one of us know if you would like to share your story or contribute to the newsletter in some way or another.

DC Metro SCA Intergroup is a group that provides many other services for SCA members across the DC area SCA meetings. If you have an interest in being part of Intergroup, please contact Ryan.

### *My Story continued*

course, I got drunk. Wine, a woman and song took me from a 3.6 average as a freshman to a gentlemanly 2.65 GPA before I graduated and got another start: the U.S. Navy.

Within a very short time of arrival in San Diego, I met my future wife in 1971. After three years of courtship, and sexual infidelity to her in both South America and the Philippines (which was met by understandable retaliatory affairs), we made up and got married in 1974 – another new beginning. Although I have not had sex with another person since our marriage, that has only been by the grace of God as I understand him, because my powerlessness over porn and masturbation while married has caused my life to become totally unmanageable.

Towards the end of my Navy career, I found myself alone in San Diego as a geographic bachelor after my second major depression. I gravitated to video booths with their smorgasbord of pornography – a real tour de force of voyeurism. I was again attracted sexually to the men I saw on the screen, but thought it might be a passing phase. I actually sought out AA again, found a great sponsor, got honest again about my alcoholism and defects of character and returned to the DC area where I retired in 1991. My wife and I went back to San Diego in 1992 and 1994 to work on her house. My powerlessness over porn kicked in both times, stealing time away to revisit the video booths. My sexual attraction to men was not just a passing phase. After our return to Virginia, things settled back to “normal” on the surface of things. However, my addiction to porn drew me to sneak gay videos and toys into the apartment until sometime in 1995 when my wife found my stash. We have not had sex since... a real case of unmanageability. I had not found a way to begin to resolve this impasse until I darkened the doorstep of SCA eight months ago.

I attended as many meetings as I could, read the literature and actually got a sponsor to help me with my struggles. We arrived at a sexual recovery plan for me in July 2008. The tools of the SCA program along with individual therapy and taking my sponsor’s guidance have kept me sexually sober one day at a time since.

Having worked all the steps previously in other programs, I know experientially the answer to my powerlessness over sex and the unmanageability in my life is in the Twelve Steps. I also know there is a lot of work between where I stand today and proper amends at Step Nine, as well as the rest of the steps in the SCA program. But all I have to do is suit up, show up and stay teachable to stay on the beam and continue the process toward a lasting sexual sobriety

### *Shame, Guilt & Grandiosity continued*

Grandiosity, by contrast, gives me the feeling that I’m perfect, that I’m always right, that I can do anything. In the past, when overcome with shame and guilt, I often expressed grandiosity to hide feelings of inferiority and fear. As a young child who needed endless attention, I boasted about minor achievements as great acts of renown and was a behavioral nightmare in elementary school. As an adult, I believed I could totally control my work environment by laboring for endless hours while harshly admonishing my employees. An enlarged EGO allowed me to participate in anonymous sex until I got arrested by the police for soliciting an officer. My whole world came to a crashing halt. It was that fall of October, 1984, that I started my journey toward sexual sobriety, freedom from love addiction, and a mature relationship with a higher power.

All of this work on myself has helped me discover that when my ego is too small, I need my addiction to comfort me through feelings of guilt and shame, and when it’s too large, I need my addiction to express power over another person and satisfy myself and only myself. The “real” Craig is somewhere in the middle. Through working the steps and with the help of my Higher Power, I get a chance to understand and love myself and right-size my ego. My main tools are “gratitude” and “affirmation” lists.

Today I affirm the fact that I sing well, I cook well, I create well. I have a profound love for animals and I enjoy photography. I am a very organized person. I have a great sense of touch and I have the ability to motivate others to achieve goals.

Today I am grateful for a glass of water and for the great company I get from my two pugs. I’m grateful for my Higher Power and for many people in this program on whom I can trust with my deepest needs. I’m grateful that I have a place of my own to live peacefully and I have transportation to get to meetings, to go to work, and to provide my life with the necessary things to live. I am grateful for music and my ability to be of service to my fellowship.

Shame, guilt and grandiosity are part of me, but my Higher Power helps me live a beautiful, self-fulfilled life anyway. The benefits are greater periods of Sobriety that I cherish.