

My Appeal to Sexaholic Gays

by
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I want to share what I believe and what I believe SA stands for and has always stood for from the beginning on an issue coming increasingly to the fore again in SA. In the process, I'd like to share my deep feelings and vision not only for the gays in SA but for gay sexaholics outside who also might need and want SA. In the process, I'll be using this to gauge where we are in SA today. For lack of a better single term, I use "gay" as a broad category including the whole spectrum of same-sex fantasy and acting out. There may well be many "homosexualities," of various origins and expressions; about such "outside issues" SA as a fellowship can have no opinion. I speak here only of gays who identify as sexaholics, powerless over lust, who want recovery.

Homophobia

In the introduction to my "Background and History" paper I talk about my intimate relations with gays before and during my early recovery years and the part that played in my own recovery and in SA's origins. These men were part of my very survival. What isn't mentioned is my long history of associating with and sharing with gays during the last 18 years in SA. Many of my closest personal friends in the fellowship are recovering from same-sex lust and experience.

Maybe the real homophobia in SA is when we blithely consign sexaholic gays to where the common illness wants to keep them, where we people-pleasingly capitulate to their newcomer fears. Where we relegate them to their "unique differentness," instead of identifying with them on the inside and being with them and bringing them with us into our common recovery. *A wise man says, "Beware of counterfeiting the love of God by working along the line of natural human sympathy, because that will end in blaspheming the love of God."* Beware indeed. I would rather treat gays who are sexaholics in a manner that is true to my own and SA's historic recovery experience than cater to their newcomer ideas and fears and risk keeping them from what could prove better for them.

Instead of patiently sticking with gays in recovery through the "impossible" transitions all lustaholics have to make over months and years, some of us would shove them off to their own "preference" pigeonholes, keep them in their place, leave them consigned to their so-called uniqueness. Is that the kind of Twelve Step program that AA tough love ushered into the world?

I say that most of us in SA don't want to leave you "outside;" we want you inside—inside the same "impossible" recovery we have to face. We want you to stay with us and come through. Who said it would be easy? Many, if not most of the opposite-sexers coming in leave because they also

fear they can't make it. SA is not for the faint-hearted. We want you to STAY. Stay through into recovery as we have to do.

What SA Stands For

SA does not stand for recovery as we as individuals might define it, but for recovery which our common experience is showing us historically to be what is out there for us if we are willing to pay the price. Recovery that works for us. SA stands for the kind of recovery the albies discovered in 1935, recovery that is possible only with God, not a “recovery” we are capable of ourselves.

SA stands for recovery from sex addiction and sexual dependency. Recovery from the centrality of sex in our lives, from sexuality as defining our personal identity. Recovery from the mis-connection with others to fill our sick need. SA stands for recovery from lust, for lust knows no gender and no “orientation.” SA stands for recovery from the self that led us astray. Recovery from having to defend ourselves and our peculiar “lifestyle.” Recovery from being “different,” or from trying to hide or prove our differentness.

SA stands for recovery from our arrested adolescence, our lost maleness, manhood and womanhood, from our aborted adulthood. SA stands for recovery to sanity, to ourselves, to husbandhood and wifehood, to fatherhood and motherhood, to a faith that works, to God as the One who heals and empowers the powerless sexaholic.

SA stands for real-, not *pseudo*-community—an across-the-board community. A community of those who cannot change, who have to admit a First Step powerlessness, that there's no way humanly possible for them to change, straight and gay alike.

SA is not a self-help support group for people with sex addiction. SA is a God-help program. The only hope SA offers, as did AA, is hope for the hopeless and helpless—those who cannot recover without finding God. We can't operate on the assumption that this is a do-it-yourself program and that recovery must be limited to that which is humanly possible. When we do that, we take ourselves out of the basic, original Twelve-Step miracle Program, and we are no longer SA.

SA is for the God who is for the sexaholic, just as we are, meeting us just where we are, so God can lead us beyond what we might consider as “good” into the best—what is best suited for us as both human beings and children of God.

SA stands for discovery—of a way of life we never knew before and feel is beyond us—impossible. This is basic, original, 12-Steps-for-helpless-addicts-Program. Nothing else works for us, as with the early albies.

SA stands for freedom, freedom from self-described or media-driven identities and limitations. Freedom from the slavery. Freedom from having to shove our “difference” or “uniqueness”—whether *Playboy* or gay—in the face of the world and force acceptance of that which even we in our deepest hearts had to secretly reject and loath. Freedom to realize fulfillment of what it really means to be a human being. I'm including myself and us *pseudo*-heterosexual lustaholics here.

SA stands for solution to the common problem characterizing gays and straights. Some would keep you “different” and therefore apart. We identify with you at the core of our common illness, which transcends gender, “orientation,” and the like. We are not different from you; we are just like you, on the inside, if you can but see it. If we can but see it! Some of us can’t see that yet; please be patient with them.

Yes, SA is counter-cultural—subversive to the elements in our culture which are so destructive to the sexaholic! Thank God. No apologies. It’s not for everyone. If you want the “easier softer way,” the culturally legitimized, you won’t want SA, and we wish you well, wherever else you go to find help.

Some in SA would deny you this option; they would try to make you stay in SA by opening the door so wide you can come in and stay just as you are! Is that what you really want—for recovery? Yes, they open a door, but that doorway leads back to where you came from! The door back to weakness, compromise, media-driven political correctness, accommodation to whatever cultural trend has been or will yet be legitimized by politics, the media, entertainment, or religion.

The door they open is not to hope, but to FEAR—failed recovery and fear of recovery—to DESPAIR. The door they open goes farther inward, deeper inside the prison house of the self. If we fall into the trap of trying to appear accepting and loving (read *people-pleasing and putting your personality before principle*), we may wind up accepting and loving the illness, cheating you of the possibility of deeper recovery, shutting the door on your recovery. Is that the kind of “recovery” you want?

We open the door not onto a broad, fast, easy freeway, but to a narrow, difficult mountain trail, an incredible journey. And to even get on that trail, we have had to ford the turbulent rapids called Doubt and Fear. There’s no other way to get on the trail. That’s why we can’t do it without God and each other—without YOU! The brightly-lit sign over the free-way reads YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU, that you can keep the self and old ideas you come in with. The guidepost by the side of this rugged unpopular trail reads, “WE WALK BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT.” And it’s not for the fearful or untrusting. It’s for the courageous who must have it.

We wait for you to join us. We hold out our hand to help you leap across that fearful chasm. You can make it! We were helped across, and you can be too. Who said it would be easy! Some of us are doing it; so can you! Take the leap of faith! To higher ground! We want you to be with us as we trudge the trail of Life together. It’s the only Way for us! It may be for you too. Could that be why you have been led to SA?

A Faith That Works

We don’t know what kind of life yours will be in recovery, just as we could not know what kind of life ours would be. We can tell you, however, that your life, like ours, can be loosed from the tyranny of lust and misconnection. That’s a promise we thought was impossible, yet today many of us, gay and straight, are experiencing impossible joy. If, as we discovered, you surrender your sex, your sexuality, your “orientation,” your life, and your will to the care of God daily in your Third Step and incorporate the other principles of this program into your life, you will be guided into what is best for you, as

some of us are being incredibly guided and blessed. We trust God for that; and it's working. You can too. Whenever we have done that, God has never failed us. But you have to be willing to trust God for that and not believe your own or someone else's understanding of who or what you are and what's best for you! *That's what a fellowship of the Twelve Steps is all about—a faith that works!* And Yes! there's a leap of faith involved.

SA Is Not for Everybody

We realize that this narrow trail is not for everybody. It's not media-popular, and who said it had to be easy? For those of us driven to SA by our dis-ease and needs, SA has been the only way out and up for us. SA's historic way. God in his wisdom and care has provided other S-fellowships accommodating every desire of those who don't want this narrow path. If one of them is for you, we bless you and wish you well. Go where you feel you must. That's what we did! Trying to change SA or saying that SA stands for a sobriety which it does not stand for destroys the spiritual unity of our fellowship, without which we have no recovery. We discovered that we do want the kind of recovery SA promises—that which is only possible with God. And we long for others to experience this life-changing discovery. But it is not and never has been for everybody. We must take a united stand on that, lest our politically-correct people-pleasing of personalities rob us of our lifesaving principles.

The Gay Issue as a Measure of Where We Are in SA Today

On the one hand, maybe the gays are the real test of SA. Some of us others think we can hide behind lust and/or misconnection with wives or husbands in what might appear to pass as traditional, legal, heterosexual (TLH) “marriage.” (I venture to say that prior to real recovery, the average “straight” married man like me doesn't have the foggiest notion of what marriage and love and sex are all about.) Or, as singles or marrieds, we play around with being periodic lusters, hiding behind our so-called “sobriety” dates. What monstrous liars we can be! But gays are faced with the fearful prospect of taking a leap of faith into the unknown. They have to “find God or die,” just like the early alkies said. So do we, but how many of us see that and take that narrow path?

So maybe it's the gays who must show us the lie we're living in. Maybe they have to show the way into breaking the lust barrier, breaking the mis-connection barrier, breaking the GOD barrier, in actually finding, experiencing, the God of the lustaholic. We, the so-called non-gays, have no recovery unless we are recovering from sex perversion in our relations with both sexes. (Yes, I use the word perversion deliberately. What better word to describe what I did with the natural God-given sex instinct in perverting my *self*, perverting woman, perverting love?) How can it be any different with sexaholic gays? How can they have recovery unless they are recovering from sex perversion in their relations with both sexes?

Strange as it may seem, the blindness may well be deeper in straights. Gays I see coming into SA seem to know deep down that they aren't making

it, that something's wrong. They're willing to give up being so shrill and infernally demanding, forcing the world into telling them they're okay. But look at the straights in SA: Some of us act like we've got the world by the tail. But how many have broken the lust barrier? And how many of us can see our pseudo-sexuality, our mis-connection with the opposite sex. Are we spiritually blind? We can't see that we are the original sex perverts. We who pervert the image of woman and our relations with women into just another form of sex with ourselves. Isn't that same-sex lust?

It's easy to see how a gay's very identity as a human being today is being defined in sexual terms. But it's more difficult to see how our so-called straight personal identity is predicated on our broken sexuality. Why can't we see that we are all alike? That's the depths of our cultural blindness. (Ref. my *Lust Virus*.)

On the other hand, straights may be the real test in SA. And are we flunking the test? Is that why some of us feel we have to accommodate—offer the “easier softer way” to gays? Because we have to fudge ourselves? Because we haven't crossed the lust barrier yet? Or the misconnection barrier? The God barrier? Has SA crossed the lust barrier yet—as a Fellowship? So how can we help the gays? Is that why we accommodate? And if we accommodate to them, instead of being a challenge and blessing, we'll only add to their dilemma and become a curse. That's what some of us don't see. But the only message SA has ever had from the beginning is RECOVERY, and that is precisely what's been happening, slowly, to increasing numbers of gay sexaholics in SA!

So maybe we—all of us—are the ones who have to take the leap of faith. Today, in SA. And put SA to the test as we did in 1981, when we went counter-cultural in proclaiming lust recovery. There were only three of us then, bi- and straight. Isolated at that. No organization, no meetings, no literature, no nothing! Nothing except each other and our powerlessness and the promise given to the world by God in 1935 to hopeless helpless drunks.

What would happen if we appealed to gay sexaholics, instead of with compromise, with the hard truth? This is the kind of approach I take:

Hey, we can't make it either, guys! Our condition is just as impossible. More so, because we can't see it or are in denial or lie about it. But some of us are beginning to see our sexually and emotionally bankrupt selves. It's seemingly impossible, but there is a way out. We didn't find it or do it; it found us. And we're just at the beginning of this incredible journey of discovery, and we invite you to be in recovery with us. To help us recover from the LIE too. The more we perceive you as “different,” the blinder we become to ourselves. So stop calling yourselves unique or different, and don't let us treat you that way. Face the truth about yourselves as we have to do. Let's do it together; we'll never make it separate.

So, our fellow “impossibles,” come jump in! And cross the river of Doubt and Fear. Here, to us. Sure it's frightening. What did you expect? “Tiptoeing through the tulips”? God's got something for us none of us can get by ourselves. WE'LL NEVER HAVE TO DRINK AGAIN!! Yes, that's the promise! Never again! We may get thirsty—sure we're going to be tempted!—but we won't have to drink!

Because the promise is LIFE. The REAL CONNECTION. What our lust has always been looking for. *Because the Program is working—for those who work it.*

What Is The Path?

Encouraging gay sexaholics to follow us on SA's historic pathway, we need to know exactly what that is and where SA has stood and still stands on the particulars of our sobriety definition and its interpretation. Because it is this historic interpretation which is the imperative calling us forward into what only God can do as we join together in this unity-based fellowship of recovery.

In our sobriety definition, the interpretation of “spouse” and “marriage” as marriage of a man and a woman in progressive victory over lust is clearly inherent and explicit in the entire scope of SA's origins, its reason for existence, its early failures, its history, and its literature. (Ref. “Background and History” paper.) *And it is this interpretation which many gay sexaholics in SA are telling us they must have and can get nowhere else.*

To say that individual members or groups may interpret “spouse” and “marriage” as they may is to violate the unique calling and purpose of SA in history and to confess that we do not really believe in SA recovery.

What If Gay Marriage Gets Legalized?

Some, even in SA leadership, are saying—as though they had the right to make that decision for SA—that if gay marriage is legalized, SA will have to accommodate to that in its interpretation of sobriety. Since when! Think about it. Does the Twelve Step program work on principle or political expediency? Child prostitution is legal in various countries. Should SA have to accommodate itself to that in those countries? There is a growing movement in this country to legalize incest between consenting parties. If that happens, should SA accommodate itself to that? *Playboy* magazine was declared legal by the Supreme Court in 1953. If the mere legality of something justifies what sexaholics can or cannot do in calling themselves sober, why can't members who choose to do so resort to *Playboy*, bring it to meetings, and share what they see? Child pornography has been declared legal on the U.S. Internet. The same logic says that SA has to endorse that. After Prohibition in 1934, alcohol was again made legal in the U.S., and drinking was wide open again. Yet that's when AA came in, going against the tide, as it were.

The Twelve Step program, in its historic origins, works on principle, not personality or politics. Who says SA must go along with the tide?

And let's look at this issue another way. SA sobriety and the Twelve Step program claim that I can recover from lust, sex addiction, misconnection, and codependency. Gay sexaholics in SA are recovering from lust, sex addiction, misconnection, and codependency. Moreover, they are telling us that they must have SA's traditional interpretation of “spouse” and “marriage,” whether they ever marry or not! The gay world out there isn't telling us that;

recovering gay sexaholics in SA are telling us that. SA is not for the world out there; it's for sexaholics who want what SA has to offer, which has never been for everyone. If you say SA must accommodate when gay marriage is made legal, what you are really saying is that *you do not believe in SA recovery, that it is not possible!* That God cannot produce this kind of recovery.

The Only Real Problem SA Has Ever Had

The only real problem SA has ever had—our underlying problem—is UNBELIEF. Unbelief in what SA claims to promise in recovery, which is what the original AA program promises—the impossible. Most everyone coming into SA believes SA stands for the traditional interpretation of “spouse” and “marriage,” especially if they’ve been exposed to the other S-fellowships (which all know that’s SA’s interpretation). Most everyone in the world believes in a God, too. People come into SA in a kind of devout, pious “acceptance.” SA appeals to them as something true and good and desirable and what they should have—what they ought to have and be. And the traditional aspect of SA is part of that appeal.

But the same thing happens after these same people get into SA as what sometimes happens when people “get religion.” All that intellectual assent to the truth, all that conviction, that persuasion, emotional capitulation, and religious sentiment, doesn’t work! The belief is genuine, but it brings NO POWER to change. This is what I call believism. And believism is unbelief!

Question: In 1935 which came first, the belief or the power? Seems to me in his hospital experience, Bill W. experienced the power of the Presence of God first, and that’s what led not merely to his “belief,” but to what he began experiencing as “a faith that works,” the hallmark of his AA teaching and writing and the hallmark of our own SA Program. And therein lies the essential difference between joining SA, belief in SA, believing in the traditional SA interpretation, and actually experiencing a faith that works—lasting sobriety and victory over lust and misconnection, regardless of sexual preference.

What SA has always promised is not just sexual sobriety, but release from the power of lust and misconnection. Not just not drinking, but the impossible joy of having our thirst satisfied. And that’s what’s really impossible for me the lustaholic to do on my own. And that’s our point of falling short in SA, is it not? Maybe it’s no coincidence, the new emphasis on groups and SA doing lust inventories today, especially since Daytona Beach. Whenever we get honest with our lust like this, we seem to conclude that most of us are still under the power of lust in some form or other. Look at how many aren’t making it with straight sex, lust, and marriage!

Unbelief produces both the failure to be loosed from lust and the failure to enter full sobriety and recovery, whether gay, straight, single, or married.

Why does mere belief in itself, whether belief in SA or belief in God, bring with it no power to change the lustaholic? Because belief in itself does not establish the Real Connection. “Belief” may connect the mind, but it doesn’t

connect the spirit of the believer with the personal saving Presence of the One who saves in that next temptation. What's in the way is the stuff the Steps are designed to get out of the way so the 12th Step awakening, the real Connection, can happen "as the result." Whenever singles or gays, regardless of religious persuasion, actually begin incorporating these twelve principles into their daily affairs, they have a change of attitude and begin to change, as others and I have begun to change, as the Big Book promises. The Steps lead to a change of heart, which leads to surrendering of our wrong attitudes and actions. It's called "a spiritual awakening." The Steps bring about *changes in attitude*, as a continuing process, not just a one-time act.

Moses the "founder" gave his people the principles and led the way out of the slavery of Egypt. But Moses did not take them into the promised land; he just gave them the hope and promise from God that they could possess it. But that first generation died in the Wilderness without experiencing the promise. And we see that it was because of UNBELIEF.

So it is that Bill W., the founder, and all his proven work and writings, and SA and its traditional interpretation—all of it—cannot bring anybody into the Promised Land of release from the power of lust and full recovery. Unbelief keeps us from crossing over. But there is a promise of entering into that REST. I can't make it happen. I've never been able to make it happen, not even for one person, including myself. But— I wake up today, and lo and behold—I am experiencing that rest! By the grace and love of God. And I see some others coming in to that rest too. And lo and behold, it is a blessed land flowing with milk and honey, as promised! It's real, as promised! But we have to face the fearful wave, go through, and possess the land. Each of us individually, yet together. And most of us are afraid. Sure we're going to face opposition! We find ourselves facing the real enemy, the enemy within—Doubt, Fear, and Unbelief—the only real enemies we have. That's when we need absolute unity with one another in what constitutes sobriety.

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Will we trust God and believe in our calling, believe in this "impossible" recovery God is challenging us with? And will we take the actions of faith? In and through each of these Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Will we stop playing the numbers game and glad-handing everyone and anyone onto the FREE-way? Will we be content to be the few, the unpopular, to follow His call so He can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves? Only God himself can give us the grace to believe and surrender—as we take the action.

"If it is an impossibility, it is the thing we must ask for. For God will do the absolutely impossible." (That's the reading Iris and I read together this morning. What an incredible coincidence.)

We can, in God's strength, follow Him in victory—together.

Roy K.