

SLAA HOW format

Step and Sponsorship Guide

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An Introduction to SLAA HOW

Welcome to the newcomers!

In this Step and Sponsorship guide, we, recovering SLAA HOW members, laid out everything we needed to work the SLAA HOW concept with a sponsor, recover from sex and love addiction, and become a sponsor ourselves once we were ready. This guide took us through all of the Twelve Steps with suggestions and sets of questions for each of the Steps.

Starting out in recovery for many of us was overwhelming. Those of us who have worked the Twelve Steps in SLAA HOW found that a structured and disciplined approach was what helped us to keep our recovery in the moment and work the program one day at a time. We worked through this guide answering no more than a question a day, allowing the answers to be as current as possible.

The acronym HOW has its origins in the *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. We find a reference in the story, *Freedom from Bondage of Self*: "The AA members who sponsored me told me in the beginning that I would not only find a way to live without having a drink, but that I would find a way to live without wanting to drink, if I would do these simple things. They said if you want to know how this program works, take the first word of your question—the "H" is for honesty, the "O" is for open-mindedness, and the "W" is for willingness; these our Big Book calls the essentials of recovery". The three words are also mentioned in the appendix, *The Spiritual Experience*: "We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty, and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable."

SLAA HOW is a Choice

There was no requirement to work the SLAA program the HOW way, it was merely a choice for those who wished to and who found that it helped them. There were other ways of working the SLAA program and we researched them before making our decision.

However, those of us who decided to work the SLAA program the SLAA HOW approach, were required to do this in a certain way. That way is described in this Step and Sponsorship Guide.

All SLAA HOW meetings are open to those who are working the program the non-HOW way. Additionally, people using the SLAA HOW approach do not have to only attend SLAA HOW meetings.

In SLAA HOW everything associated with working the SLAA Twelve Step program applies, including all Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, core SLAA and AA literature, and all published SLAA FWS literature.

The HOW Concept

The Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous HOW concept was formed to offer the sex and love addict a disciplined and structured approach to working the Twelve Steps. There were no absolutes for sobriety in SLAA, as individual patterns of sex and love addiction varied. However, the SLAA HOW groups were formed in the belief that our disease was absolute and therefore only strict acceptance of the HOW way of working would offer any sustained sobriety to those of us whose compulsion had reached a critical level.

Therefore, we accepted our HOW defined Bottom-Line sobriety, Step questions, Maintenance Questions, outreach calls, the Twelve Steps and Traditions and our other tools as requirements for our recovery. We committed ourselves to a black and white sobriety to deal with the grey areas of living.

In HOW we found that, if we committed to using the tools of recovery daily, our disease of sex and love addiction could be arrested, one day at a time.

How the HOW Approach Works

The HOW approach to working the Twelve Steps was a thorough approach that supported and protected us as we took a much-needed and cleansing look at ourselves, our behaviour, our relationships (or lack of them) including our love, or lack of love for ourselves.

We began by answering the first seven “Bottom Line” questions, to see if the HOW approach worked for us. We answered one question a day, working with a sponsor (a SLAA HOW member with more experience than us whom we had asked to guide us). We normally rang our sponsor at the same or an agreed time every day and read our answer out to them over the phone. For many of us, this disciplined approach offered a welcome safety net and sense of security and purpose to our recovery and our new lives. It could seem difficult at times, but we valued the structure this provided.

By the end of the first seven questions most of us were clearer on the activities and actions we needed to avoid (or start taking) in order to give ourselves a chance to heal from an often exhausting, debilitating dis-ease that could make our lives unbearable and unmanageable. We reviewed our answers with our sponsor and set Bottom Lines that would serve to heal and support us in our recovery.

After we had answered the first seven questions, we got on to answer the questions for Steps One, Two and Three – one per day, for the next thirty days. Through this process we developed an understanding and acceptance of the first Three Steps. Daily calls with our sponsor, outreach calls to other SLAA members, the questions, meetings and trust in our Higher Power surrounded us with the strength and the tools we needed to keep the addictive patterns out of our lives, one day at a time. And so, recovery began.

The Tools

We worked with a sponsor to identify our personal Bottom Lines. We became sober by abstaining from these Bottom-Line behaviours daily. Our definition of sobriety was a minimum of 30 days sobriety against our Bottom Lines as agreed with our SLAA HOW sponsor. We used SLAA and AA literature, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as tools of examination and release.

We attended a minimum of three meetings per week. These could be regular SLAA meetings or meetings using the SLAA HOW approach. Meetings were dedicated to the concept of remaining honest, open-minded, and willing to listen. This was the HOW of the program.

We made four phone calls a day during the first thirty-seven days - one to our sponsor and three outreach calls to other SLAA members. The phone was like a lifeline. We needed the contact. It could be like a mini-meeting. Although it was not a requirement but a suggestion to make three outreach calls a day during the first seven day “Bottom Line” questions, the HOW concept did require us to make at least three outreach calls to other SLAA members during the following 30-day period.

We practiced daily prayer and meditation to develop a relationship with a power greater than ourselves that could guide and sustain us in recovery, being forever aware that Higher Power was doing for us what we had never been able to do for ourselves.

Service was freedom from the bondage of self, giving back what we'd freely and lovingly received. It was helping at meetings, setting up chairs, making coffee and welcoming newcomers. Sobriety was service to us and the group.

A SLAA HOW sponsor was a sex and love addict who, by the grace of God, had 30 days of continuous sobriety working the SLAA HOW concept and had taken the first three Steps. Discretion, common sense and our Higher Power guided us in our selection.

In summary, the way we worked the Twelve Steps using the SLAA HOW approach during Steps One to Three was as follows:

- We attended at least three meetings per week. These could be regular SLAA meetings or meetings using the SLAA HOW approach.
- We made four calls a day: three outreach calls to fellow members in SLAA and one call to our sponsor.
- We worked the Steps answering a question a day with a sponsor.
- We maintained our Bottom-Line sobriety.

After the first three Steps the requirements set out above became suggestions. Some sponsors and sponsees continued with this exact same approach, others reduced the frequency of required meetings; the numbers of calls to be made; and established new approaches to answering and reading out questions - for example by calling in once or twice a week, and/or meeting face to face to read through all the answers for that Step.

Sponsoring

Finding a Sponsor

To start working the Twelve Steps we needed to find a sponsor who had already finished at least Step Three of the SLAA HOW concept. We found the best way to do this was to attend as many meetings as possible. These could be meetings that used the HOW approach or not, if the sponsor chosen had been sponsored in the SLAA HOW way. We found many meetings online if we were not able to attend face-to-face meetings, or if meetings using the HOW approach were not available in our country or city. We kept asking until we found a suitable sponsor. We wanted a sponsor who had worked through the Steps the HOW way themselves, understood it and who could share their experience, strength, and hope.

Within the HOW approach, we found that different sponsors worked the program in different ways. We talked about what their expectations were before starting the work together to see if they were a good fit. We discussed basic matters such as time availability, or any other issues that might come up. After we had done the first seven questions, we set our Bottom Lines, usually with the help of our sponsor. For many of us this was the first time in our lives anyone had actually helped us set normal, healthy boundaries for ourselves. It was of great relief to have this kind of help. We found that, ultimately, our sponsor was there to listen, guide, encourage and share their experience, strength and hope with us. Sometimes they needed to challenge us. Some of us found it better in the early stages to find a good sponsor rather than wait for the perfect sponsor. The HOW approach required that a sponsor could only sponsor up to the level they had completed in their own program and have at least 30 days of back-to-back sobriety.

What is a Sponsor?

We defined a sponsor as someone who provided support and guidance in working through the Twelve Step program with another member of the Fellowship. We defined a SLAA HOW sponsor as someone who had worked or was working the SLAA HOW approach and who could guide fellow sex and love addicts through that program.

If we felt ready to do so, the SLAA HOW approach gave us the opportunity to start sponsoring other fellow members once we had completed Step Three and up to Step Three. If we had completed Step Five, then we could sponsor up to Step Five. And if we had completed any Step between Steps Six to Twelve, we could sponsor up until the last Step we had completed.

Before deciding whether we were ready for sponsorship, some of us read the pamphlet entitled, "Sponsorship, a Return from Isolation". This was primarily a guide for those seeking sponsors, but it helped the prospective sponsors among us too. We also consulted our own sponsor and sought guidance from our Higher Power. As a sponsor, we had to remember that:

- ✓ We were not a parent, a therapist, an instructor, or a confessor. We were an advisor who made recommendations.
- ✓ We shared our experience, strength, and hope. We shared what had worked for us. We did not say things like, “What we do in SLAA is...” or, “What you should do...”, and instead used phrases like, “What I did was... and this worked for me.” We found it was best to avoid trying to convince the sponsee of anything. Whether they knew it yet or not, they had their Higher Power guiding them. The program and their Higher Power would take care of them in their own timescale. We needn’t worry about them, merely keep them and their struggles in mind.
- ✓ We shared our program. As much as possible, we made outreach calls focused around the program, our experience of the program and program literature.
- ✓ We shared our struggle, avoiding traps of ego, dependence and/or reliance. We and our sponsee knew that we were only an instrument of our Higher Power.
- ✓ We shared our compassion without judgment or criticism. When the sponsee said they were struggling, feeling the pain of withdrawal, or saying that he or she had slipped - we expressed our compassion. We tried to say things like, “That sounds painful...” or, “I remember how it felt when I was in withdrawal...” We tried not to judge what the sponsee said or did by commenting, “That’s good” or, “That’s bad.” Rather, we acknowledged what they had shared with us. We let them know we had heard them.
- ✓ We shared our attitude. We conveyed the importance of service and giving to others. We shared the concept of, “Just for Today” as a means of survival.
- ✓ We avoided being drawn into philosophical arguments, discussion, or gossip. If we felt we were going beyond our remit as a SLAA sponsor, we tried to stop ourselves. We used gentle phrases such as, “I don’t know about that...” or, “If it were me, I would consult my Higher Power”.
- ✓ We shared our honesty. If we slipped or acted out, we told our sponsee; they had a right to know. We didn’t shame or isolate ourselves from our sponsee. We picked ourselves up and carried on. We showed them how it was done and that we were not “super-human”.
- ✓ We shared our discipline. Our discipline was, after all, all the newcomer may have experienced as discipline. Our discipline in the SLAA HOW approach was not, however, about being harsh or lacking compassion.
- ✓ We made sure we were familiar with the HOW concept requirements as set out in this Guide. Things not listed in this guide were not requirements of the HOW approach. As with any fellowship it was possible that anecdotal requirements could become misconceptions about the HOW approach. Sponsors needed to be wary of these and ensure they were fully informed about the concept. A few common misconceptions are listed in the Appendix.

Setting Bottom and Top Lines

Defining Bottom Lines - The First Seven Days

During the first seven days, we worked with our sponsor to decide on what behaviours we needed to stop in order to best support our recovery. We answered a question a day and read the answer to our sponsor who was there to listen, gently guide and give feedback, if we needed it. We answered each question in order and on the day so that our answers were as current as possible as to how we felt on that day.

Once we had answered these questions, we were able to set our Bottom Lines with the help of our sponsor, the outreach calls and the guidance of our Higher Power. We were addicts, and each of us was unique, so it was important to tailor our Bottom Lines to each of our own specific addictive or anorexic behaviours. We also agreed to some Middle Line and Top Line behaviours if appropriate, in order to support our recovery.

During the first Seven Day Identification Questions we needed the following texts: *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and the following SLAA pamphlets to support our research into our behaviours: "40 Questions for Self-Diagnosis", "Anorexia: Sexual, Social, Emotional", "Withdrawal: Gateway to Freedom, Hope and Joy", "Romantic Obsession", "Questions Beginners Ask", and "Setting Bottom Lines".

1. What is sex and love addiction? Read the twelve characteristics of sex and love addiction. Underline any words or concepts you are unfamiliar with and discuss them with your sponsor. Also underline passages that you identify with or that remind you of your own behaviour. Discuss these on your daily outreach calls and also with your sponsor.
2. Read Step One from *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, pp. 68-70. Do you identify as a sex addict, a love addict, or both of these? Referring to examples from your life, discuss how you have acted out in these areas in the past.
3. Read the pamphlet, "40 Questions for Self-Diagnosis". Tick the behaviours you most identify with. Choose the 10 most relevant and write a few sentences on each, using specific examples from your past.
4. Read the SLAA pamphlet on anorexia, "Anorexia: Sexual, Social, Emotional", as it relates to sexual, social and emotional anorexia. Do you relate to any of these behaviours? Discuss.
5. Read Chapter 5, "The Withdrawal Experience", in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, and also the SLAA pamphlet, "Withdrawal: Gateway to Freedom, Hope and Joy". Discuss how you experienced withdrawal in relation to sex and love relationships; for example, when a relationship ended or was terminated.
6. Read the SLAA pamphlet, "Romantic Obsession". Note anything that is meaningful to you. Discuss and reflect on what you have learnt. Read the sections, "What is Acting Out?" and, "What are Slips?" from the, "Questions Beginners Ask" pamphlet. Have you tried to control your compulsive behaviour in the past? Discuss how, in what way, and why you slipped and acted out after decisions to behave differently?
7. Read the SLAA pamphlet, "Setting Bottom Lines" and also the section in this guide about setting Top Lines. Write a list of the obvious behaviours that you would consider necessary to Bottom-Line or Top-Line. Write a list of more subtle behaviours (Middle Lines) that you suspect may cause you trouble. Discuss these with your sponsor to arrive at Bottom Line and/or Top Line behaviours for the 30 day, Steps One - Three period. Reflect on how absolute honesty is necessary to combat sex and love addiction.

Bottom Lines

Bottom lines were behaviours that we chose to abstain from in order to begin recovering from sex and love addiction. They were guidelines for our new life. When we stopped the unhealthy behaviours that had made us so unhappy in the past, we began to experience our physical, mental, emotional, sexual and spiritual wholeness. We started to engage with life.

Bottom Lines seemed hard to stick with in the beginning. We felt we simply could not survive without our old behaviours, although they drove us to despair, or, for some of us, close to suicide.

In spite of our reservations and fears that we would not be able to maintain our Bottom Lines, we found that with the help of a sponsor, our peers in recovery and our program of recovery, we could do it one day at a time.

Because there were so many possible patterns that an individual's addiction could take, each of us identified and set our own Bottom Lines (with the help of our sponsor). We found that Bottom Lines were efficient when they were specific enough to be helpful, but not so detailed that they were impossible to keep. Some of us found Bottom Lines to be useful when they were observable and quantifiable.

But how could we set Bottom Lines? Once we had found a SLAA HOW sponsor, we began the first seven questions set out above. As trust in the relationship with our sponsor developed, we identified the behaviours that kept us from getting our authentic needs from being met. Some of us purchased the SLAA pamphlet, "Setting Bottom Lines" at a meeting or at the online store. The pamphlet offered us a plan to help break the destructive cycles of sex and love addiction. In using it and its worksheets, we sought the help of our sponsor or another trusted SLAA member. At the end of the seven days, we agreed on our Bottom Lines with our sponsor, then began answering a question a day for the next thirty days.

Top Lines

If Bottom Lines were destructive or addictive behaviours that we chose to exclude from our lives, Top Lines were positive, affirming behaviours that we now chose to include. They were a tool for sanity when we felt least sane – a way to get out of our head, and into our heart. For many of us, Top Lines were the start of living the life unlived.

Some of us came to the program having deprived ourselves of sex, sexual contact and intimate relationships throughout our lives. As we exerted much time and energy in our acting out or in acting in, we forgot what a healthy lifestyle looked like or how it felt. We lost the ability to nurture ourselves, to pursue healthy interests and activities for ourselves. We may also have lost the ability to build friendships with people who were truly available and trustworthy. It mattered little if our addiction was compulsively perusing sex and love or isolating from sex and love, we knew that if we were to truly live beyond the addiction, we would have to learn new skills.

Whilst some instinctively knew what was lacking - for example, spiritual connection, exercise and food choices - there often seemed to be something greater missing from our lives. Some described it as "purpose" or a need for learning, creativity, enjoyment or, connection to us and to our community. Some described it simply as "being in the moment".

Being in recovery even for a short time had brought us some clarity and the ability to be still. Some discovered the use of prayer and meditation. For some of us it was the first time that we fully connected to or experienced past grief or trauma. Some of us arrived in SLAA already withdrawn and found it difficult to connect or trust others.

If we identified as anorexics in SLAA, then ours was a disease of deprivation and not doing. In that case, Top Lines were crucial. As anorexics, we often acted in rather than acted out. Yet by acting in (not doing) we were in fact acting out our old patterns of avoidance that prevented us from healthy and loving relationships with ourselves and others.

For us anorexics, it was good to set Top Lines from the beginning - soft slow steps towards more doing. For those who were acting out, this need for Top Lines became evident around Step Four. Whilst looking at the wreckage of the past, we found that we needed an outlet for our feelings, we needed stillness and some activity (or non-activity) to help process the painful resentment, anger, shame or fear that had been suppressed for many years.

Many of us found some types of Top Line more difficult to put into practice than others. We used the same tools that we used for Bottom Lines, we stated our powerlessness and worked the Steps, practicing progress, not perfection. We prayed for courage and we asked for support from people we trusted.

Some of us set Top Lines in the same way as Bottom Lines - so that not adhering to them may be interpreted as a slip or loss of sobriety. Other sponsors suggested that we create at least as many Top Lines as Bottom Lines, so that we were sure to replace destructive behaviours with new, healthy ones; or merely to begin to open our lives to healthy contact where there had been complete or near complete deprivation. Some of us responded to a gentler approach so that some or even all our Top Lines were defined as guidelines rather than strict adherence. Ultimately, in defining our Bottom Lines and/or Top Lines, we listened to guidance from our sponsor and our Higher Power.

When choosing a Top Line and deciding its frequency, we found it best to start slowly. We started with one activity a month, for example. We took great pride in not judging our progress or quality of performance. Showing up for ourselves was what mattered. If going swimming was the personal Top Line, then how many laps swum was irrelevant.

Swimming for 2 minutes or going to a party for 10 minutes could be wonderfully life-affirming if we hadn't done so for a long time. We left when we had had enough.

We kept it simple, uncomplicated and focused on the "doing" or "being" rather than the end result. We learned it was ok to try things and leave them if they didn't provide what we wanted for ourselves. We parented ourselves throughout in a loving, gentle and encouraging way.

Suggestions for Top Lines

Like Bottom Lines, Top Lines were specific to each of us. It was important to adjust them and get a balance. Top Lines challenged us to get on with our lives while getting on with the business of recovery. We talked each section through with our sponsor and made a list that was appropriate for each of us.

Spiritual Top Lines

For some of us these included daily readings, reflection, prayer, meditation, and mindfulness. Some saw their Step work and journaling as a Spiritual Top Line, or walking in nature or visiting a place of worship. Some sought solace or reconnection with their faith by attending a SLAA retreat or convention or by visiting a specific place, tree, lake or rock.

Personal Top Lines

These were a nurturing or fun activity that was individual to each of us. For example, going to a gig to see our favourite artist, an exhibition, the swimming pool, the park or a particular spot in nature that was special to us. It could be cooking ourselves our favourite meal or going to our favourite restaurant or coffee shop on a regular basis. It could be picking up a long abandoned musical instrument, buying ourselves flowers. For some of us, Personal Top Lines were trying a new skill – nothing to do with the past or our career. Or signing up for a class or tuition in something we had always wanted to do but had never had the time to. Learning to draw, paint, write, sail, sing, cycle, bike, climb, drive, swim - whatever the need or desire for growth. Some found regular exercise as a safe release for anger – using a punch bag, mattress or pillow to hit (useful in Step Four). For some, this process seemed to release anger from the body. If we had experienced a long period of abstinence or withdrawal, having the physical contact of massage was healing. Or having the courage to seek medical advice and therapy for untreated symptoms that affected our health, our ability to have sex or to be intimate in relationship. Some of us entered into psychotherapy as a way to support our recovery and help deal with the trauma of our past. Becoming sober in SLAA allowed the possibility of acceptance and healing that was not possible before

sobriety. Where we previously felt fear or were in denial, we now saw hope and an opportunity for growth.

Some of us discovered the model of the wounded “inner child” and learned to take care of our needs, creating a “loving parent” and parenting ourselves in ways different from our own upbringing.

Social Top Lines

These started with saying “yes” to social invitations from those we trusted. If we felt socially anorexic, we practiced organizing a meet-up (coffee, lunch, cinema, gig, concert, sports game, cycle, run or walk with a group). Some of us signed up for a dance / exercise class, woodwork, carving, bread-making, drumming, self-defence. It was by engaging with people that we trusted and were able to help us that we also learned how to tolerate people that we found difficult, challenging or triggering.

Community Top Lines

Sponsoring, doing service in our home groups and intergroup were useful ways to learn about giving from ourselves. Some of us practiced small acts of kindness. Some went on to volunteering in their communities, teaching, coaching or facilitating for a cause that they felt passionate about. We found many needs in our modern world that could benefit from people like us who had gained personal awareness through recovery. There was no greater feeling than being able to contribute to the community around us. Giving hope to one person could make a huge difference in their lives and ours.

Relationship Top Lines

As we moved through the Steps and developed a relationship with a Higher Power and ourselves and an ability to nurture and self-soothe, some of us considered if it was time to practice relationships. We initially worked on developing friendships or improving relationships with the family (as appropriate). In due course and in consultation with our sponsor we commenced dating or recommitting to a partner having devised an appropriate plan for dating. We thought carefully before commencing romantic relationships, reviewing the robustness of our recovery, the extent of Step work we had committed to, the distance travelled and our vulnerability to addiction. We also considered whether our history was one of anorexia and avoidance, in which case such Top Lines might be considered earlier in our recovery, again having given careful consideration as to what lay behind our intimacy issues and what work we had done or needed to do to overcome these. The answer as to when to work on romantic relationships and in what way was entirely a matter of Higher Power direction, individual experience and journey. But our new and developing relationship with our Higher Power and with ourselves were the most important relationships in our recovery and needed to be strong before commencing romantic relationships.

Breaking Bottom Lines - What are Slips?

A slip or bust was a return to addictive behaviour, however brief. In terms of the HOW concept, we defined a slip as “breaking a Bottom Line”, a Bottom Line agreed with our sponsor. If the behaviour was not agreed with our sponsor, then it was not a slip and it wouldn’t lead to slip questions. Sometimes the process of reviewing the slip and talking it over with our sponsor gave us new insights and also might identify other aspects of addictive behaviour that needed to be Bottom lined at this time.

Experience had shown us that slips didn’t “just happen.” Most of us SLAA members who had been through these periods could say that slips could be traced to specific causes. We forgot that we were sex and love addicts and became overconfident or complacent. Or we became too preoccupied with business or social affairs to remember the importance of abstaining from acting out. Our foundation Steps of One, Two or Three were not strong enough. Or we let ourselves become tired and were caught with our mental and emotional defences down. In any event, we withdrew from taking advantage of the help available to us. We ceased maintaining our SLAA lifeline. Getting honest and “current” with another SLAA member or at an SLAA meeting helped us overcome the despair of slipping and put our recovery back on track. For many of us it was also useful to read more about slips in the SLAA, “Questions Beginners Ask” pamphlet.

Slip Questions and Sobriety

A requirement of the SLAA HOW concept was that, whilst working the first Three Steps and answering the first thirty questions, we maintained 30 days of continuous sobriety as defined by our Bottom or Top Lines and as agreed with our sponsor. Top Lines were often not defined as strict sobriety requirements for anorexics, but they could be if this was felt appropriate or useful.

If we slipped against our stipulated Bottom or Top Lines in these first thirty days/Three Steps, we needed to regain or achieve this thirty-day sobriety. We found this to be a time of pause to reconnect with our Higher Power and our true selves. We did this to ensure that our Step work wasn't tainted by our addiction and that we had a solid foundation in Steps One, Two and Three.

If we broke a Bottom Line behaviour during this time, we regained our sobriety through daily contact with our sponsor and by answering questions from, "Further Thoughts on Sobriety" for the same number of days that we had been working the Steps. For example, if we were on day 21 of the 30 questions and we broke a Bottom Line, we answered 21 "Further Thoughts on Sobriety" Slip questions and read our answers to our sponsor each day, and then resumed the 30-day questions from where we left off. In this case, from day 21. This was to support us in becoming sober again before continuing our Step work - the measure being 30 days of abstinence from Bottom Line behaviours.

The objective was not punitive but to give us the support and connection we needed to help us through this period and to support our recovery.

Slips that took place after Step Three were discussed with our sponsor. There were no hard and fast rules about the return to sobriety but typically this was a process of reflection, review and discussion of Bottom or Top Lines and agreed action to take. Each sponsor passed on the learning that was handed over to them. Some assigned 30 days of slip questions, regardless. Others considered the nature of the slip and assigned a varying number of slip questions depending on the context. Some agreed on a period of checking in with them and writing on the slip.

The Withdrawal Experience

Between the unhappy, out-of-control circumstances that brought us to SLAA and the recovery miracles we heard people share about, was a challenging stage called "withdrawal".

This period could definitely be difficult and painful. Suddenly we were no longer using our old devices of sex and love addiction to get by in life. This could have come as quite a shock and in fact many members described this early period of "withdrawing" from our past lives of sex and love addiction as exactly that, a state of shock.

So, what was withdrawal? Withdrawal was what happened when we stopped using our old patterns of escape and were suddenly left with ourselves. In other words, we "drew back" from the old to take on the new and it was this period in-between that we called withdrawal.

Withdrawal could seem very disconcerting at times. Here we were at a turning point gradually choosing to let go of our past painful yet familiar lives, to take on an unknown source of pain that seemed like it might well be worse and might go on forever.

Sometimes we had a sense of feeling downright strange, maybe panicky and possibly even a little unreal. We may have lost sleep and often felt very uncomfortable in our bodies. Some of us had thoughts of suicide.

However, in our experience all of us who were willing and sincere got through this period with the help of the program and each other.

Common experiences and feelings we witnessed in withdrawal included: intense feelings of sadness and excitement, sleep disturbances, craving past partners, craving past activities, loneliness and isolation, anger and frustration, headaches, sadness or depression, emotional pain, physical symptoms such as flu-

like symptoms, decreased or increased appetite, a desire to use alcohol or drugs, and exhaustion or compulsive activity.

Facing Withdrawal

The SLAA HOW approach surrounded us with a very strong program of tools, including sponsorship, daily questions, partnership with a Higher Power and the fellowship of others sharing our path, so that we had a safe space to help us move through this withdrawal stage of our recovery.

This is one of the reasons it was highly recommended to make four outreach calls a day (three to fellow members and one to our sponsor). It was also why HOW placed such emphasis upon Bottom Lines, answering written questions, going to meetings and regular contact with our sponsor and fellows.

Many of us found these HOW suggestions challenging at first. But we took courage and support from the fact that, time and again, fellow SLAA members said these tools were what pulled them through the challenging period of withdrawal. Most of us found that the more willingly we adopted the strong support and structure of H.O.W., the more gracefully we fell apart and rebuilt our lives.

It was through withdrawal that we met ourselves as we were because it was only behind the fear that we found the seeds of our own personal wholeness.

Here were some other ways that we helped ourselves through withdrawal: we kept up our outreach calls, we kept answering one HOW question a day, we kept in touch with our sponsor, we attended meetings, we went for coffee/fellowship after meetings, we prayed, we took a service position, we were kind to ourselves, we connected with our body by walking, exercising, practicing yoga or bathing, we saw a movie, we meditated, we journaled and wrote, we said positive affirmations, we made a gratitude list each morning or before going to bed, we read Steps One, Two and Three.

Some of us found that the SLAA pamphlet, *Withdrawal: Gateway to Freedom, Hope, and Joy*, was an invaluable source of suggestions for entering, coping with, and emerging from withdrawal. Others read Chapter Five of the *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, which deals more fully with the experiences members have had in this process, and the tools they have used to survive the withdrawal experience without relapsing into the addictive patterns.

Guide to Steps One to Three

Step One: "We admitted we were powerless over sex and love addiction - that our lives had become unmanageable."

Step Two: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Step Three: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God."

To start working the steps with a sponsor, we needed a copy of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book and, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. As with the 7-day identification questions to determine our Bottom-Line behaviours, we answered a question per day and read it to our sponsor. At the end of the 30 days, our sponsor took us through a Step Three Ceremony and then stepped us up at a meeting to celebrate the completion of Steps One to Three. After the Step Three Ceremony to celebrate the completion of Steps One to Three, we started sponsoring fellow members of SLAA up to Step Three, if we felt ready to do so.

If we were sponsoring and were unavailable on a particular day, it was our responsibility to let our sponsee know that they could share their writing in an outreach call with another fellow, arrange a different time, an email exchange or read the answer in a voice message. If, for some reason, we were unavailable for a longer period of time, it was our responsibility to find another temporary sponsor for our sponsee. Sometimes this was our own sponsor.

We also let our sponsee know that if they consistently failed to meet agreed boundaries without good reason, for example not calling us at the agreed time for three consecutive days without good reason, we may decide to no longer sponsor them.

We encouraged our sponsees to share at SLAA HOW meetings after 14 days of sobriety or as the meeting allowed. We were aware that some meetings restricted or prioritised sharing by those with more than 14 days of recovery so that the first part of the meeting focused on carrying the message, and a message of hope.

If we, as sponsors, slipped, we notified our own sponsor and all our sponsees, giving them the option to continue with us or not. We did not stand up as a sponsor or accept new sponsees until the time agreed with our sponsor. If we had a slip, we shared after 7 days of sobriety. We knew all of the above was designed to heal and to support us whilst we regained sobriety.

The First Thirty Questions

In working this guide together with our sponsor, we found that no sheet of paper or list of ideas was the be-all and end-all for everyone's recovery. We designed these questions to guide us through the first Three Steps. There were no right or wrong answers. Many who have worked the HOW concept found that it was helpful to "keep it in the day" in terms of working the Steps and the questions by focusing only on the question of the day and the Step being worked on on any given day, and by not skipping ahead to the next questions and steps.

In order to answer the next 30 questions, we required the following additional reading material: Bill W's, "This Matter of Honesty" article. [Available at augustinefellowship.com.au](http://augustinefellowship.com.au)

- 1) Read, "The Doctor's Opinion" in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. Write a history of your sex and love addiction beginning with the first time you can remember related events. Discuss how many partners you have had (or not had in the case of anorexia), what medical/psychological attention you have sought for the problem and your attempts at controlling your behaviour.
- 2) Read Step One in Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, SLAA's basic text. Discuss and reflect upon the effect sex and love addiction and anorexia have had upon you over the years. Do you truly see yourself as a sex and love addict?
- 3) Re-read Step One in Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, SLAA's basic text. Discuss and reflect upon the following ideas found in Step One: the progressive nature of our disease and the need for unconditional surrender.
- 4) Discuss and reflect upon the fatal nature of our disease as described on page 24, second paragraph, in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Focus on how the disease has diminished your life.
- 5) Read Chapter 2, "There is a Solution", in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect upon the idea that your discipline or lack of it has played an important part in your life.
- 6) Read Chapter 3, "More about Alcoholism", in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect on this chapter.
- 7) Read Bill W's, "This Matter of Honesty" article. Discuss the idea that deception of others is nearly always rooted in deception of ourselves. How does this relate to your sexual relationship history? What have you done in the past, due to sex and love addiction, that reaffirms this idea?
- 8) Re-read Step One in Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, SLAA's basic text. Underline and note words and passages that are meaningful to you. Why are they important? Discuss and reflect on what a complete understanding of Step One can do for you.
- 9) Read Step Two in Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, SLAA's basic text. Why is it necessary to take Step One before taking Step Two?
- 10) Discuss and reflect upon the effectiveness of the SLAA program from your personal experience and from what you have observed in others so far. Could what you experienced have emanated solely from you? If so, why had it not happened before?
- 11) Read Chapter 4, "We Agnostics", in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect upon the concepts of honesty, open-mindedness and willingness. How are these tools of growth in the HOW program?
- 12) Discuss and reflect upon the concept of insanity as it applies to you in SLAA
- 13) Read Step Two in, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Have you substituted your addiction for your Higher Power in the past and do you still do this?
- 14) Discuss and reflect upon the following concepts in Step Two: belief means reliance, not defiance, and defiance is an outstanding characteristic of every sex and love addict. Refer to page 31 in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
- 15) Re-read Step Two in Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, SLAA's basic text and Step Two in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Discuss and reflect upon your childhood exposure to any religious concept. On a two-columned balance sheet list your feelings as they relate to early religious

experiences. List on one side your negative feelings, and on the other side your positive feelings. What conclusion do you reach when you reflect on the balance sheet?

- 16) Read Step Three in Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, SLAA's basic text. Create another balance sheet. On one side list all the reasons you can for believing in God. On the other side list all the reasons for disbelieving. What conclusions do you reach when you reflect on the balance sheet?
- 17) Read Step Three in, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Discuss and reflect upon the following quote, "Faith alone can avail us nothing".
- 18) Read Chapter 5, "How it Works", in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. Write on dependence as you understand it. How can dependence lead to greater independence? Refer also to Step Three, page 36, in, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
- 19) Read Chapter 2, "There is a Solution", in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. Are you a grateful sex and love addict? If so, why?
- 20) Re-read Step Three in Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, SLAA's basic text. Reflect upon the following idea, "I am responsible for only one person's actions". Whose and why?
- 21) Read Chapter 3, "More about Alcoholism", in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect upon the idea that Bottom-Line or Top-Line sobriety is the most important thing without exception.
- 22) Discuss the idea of "Calling a HALT (hungry, angry, lonely or tired)", pausing and taking stock when your life becomes unmanageable.
- 23) Read Chapter 11, "A Vision for You", in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect upon the idea that, the more you give, the more you shall receive.
- 24) Read Chapter 6, "Into Action", in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. SLAA teaches us a sense of dignity. How have you used your new-found dignity in relationship to yourself, your family and your friends?
- 25) Read Chapter 7, "Working with Others", in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. What is the importance of giving service in SLAA? Why are meetings important? How are they both part of your road to recovery?
- 26) What is the importance of the telephone in SLAA? Why is anonymity important? How are they linked?
- 27) Discuss and reflect on reading and writing as a tool of the program. Why is it essential to your recovery?
- 28) Read Appendix 2, "Spiritual Experience", in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect upon the concept that spiritual growth is a daily commitment. How can you grow daily?
- 29) Re-read Step Three in Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, SLAA's basic text. Write on the idea that, having taken Steps One and Two, the degree of your success in the whole program depends on how sincerely you surrender in accordance with Step Three.
- 30) Re-read Step One in Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, SLAA's basic text, in the morning. Review your two balance sheets in questions 15 and 16. Does the act of surrender in Step Three bring you

peace? And, if not, do you think there is anything you are holding on to that you need to let go of in order to reach such acceptance? Do you think this is something you should do, or are you doing it willingly? Make a sincere commitment to turn your will and your life over to the care of your Higher Power. Discuss and reflect on your own personal surrender.

Step Three Ceremony

Ceremonies are part and parcel of all humanity and it is for this reason that we built an *optional* ceremony into the SLAA HOW concept at the end of Step Three.

We also celebrated by stepping up sponsees at meetings when they completed Steps Three, Five, Twelve or the Maintenance Steps.

The texts for the ceremonies are found in separate documents.

Stepping Up the Sponsee at a Meeting

After the Step Three Ceremony, some of us were “stepped up” by our sponsor at a SLAA HOW meeting on completion of Steps Three (as well as steps Five and Twelve). The purpose of these ceremonies was so the group could join us in celebrating another example of the miracles that abounded in SLAA Our sponsor was asked to introduce a newcomer who had 30 days of continuous back-to-back abstinence, had taken the first Three Steps and was ready to become a sponsor. At the meeting, we shared for two minutes each.

Guide to Step Four

Step Four: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Once we had completed the first three Steps in the program, it was time to start on Step Four. This could often seem a daunting undertaking and it was one of the Steps in the program where many of us faltered, evaded, and occasionally slipped. Our sponsor's experience, love, support and encouragement were all the more important.

Before embarking on Step Four, some of us found it appropriate at this stage to discuss and review the boundaries around our relationship with our sponsor. For example, maybe daily phone calls were no longer needed. However, it was important that the discipline of regular meetings, phone calls to our sponsor and outreach calls were maintained. It kept us connected to the power of recovery and helped us to avoid slips and relapses.

It could also be appropriate to reconsider our Bottom or Top lines. The experience of those who worked the program suggested that it was rarely appropriate to remove Bottom Lines at this stage. However, that was not to say it wasn't appropriate; every person and situation was different. Discussion with our sponsor and connection with our Higher Power guided the way. More often, it could be appropriate to discuss adding or changing the behaviours in our Bottom Lines as we changed our addictive patterns.

Often it was now appropriate or helpful for there to be Top Lines for us to work on. Top Lines were positive, affirming behaviours and actions. They could've included such things as doing something for fun, such as listening to music, taking exercise, or taking part in a regular spiritual practice. We let Higher Power be the guide on this.

We worked Step Four following the Step Four Guidelines contained in this booklet. We were asked to read the following before commencing our inventory:

- ✓ Read the section about Step Four in Chapter Five (How it Works) in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book;
- ✓ Step Four in, *AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*;
- ✓ Step Four in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text

Before starting work, we met (if possible) or spoke to our sponsor so they could explain the guidelines and how to complete the inventory and deal with any questions.

We wrote down the inventory and completed it as suggested in chapter Five of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. We sometimes used the same or a similar format to the table attached in this section. Our inventory was split into four parts: review of resentments, review of fears; review of sex conduct; and review of harms other than sexual.

Many of us set a date for the Fifth Step before starting the Fourth Step so that there was a deadline in place, even if that deadline was subsequently moved. Whatever was agreed, our sponsor guided and supported us as we were working through the inventory.

Regular check-ins were made to review progress and to check that we were completing the inventory as suggested. Above all, it was important that forward progress was made on this Step and that it was completed as quickly as possible. The experience of those who had worked the program was that it was easy to get stuck, let things slip (or to have a slip!) at this time.

Getting Started

We bought paper and pen and started writing. *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, stated on eight different occasions that we were to write out a Step Four. It had been our experience that when we stopped acting out, the problems that were caused by the sex and love addiction began to dissipate. This

often left us with the underlying issues or problems that had caused us to act out in the first place. And these were the issues that stayed with us causing pain unless we did something about them. In the past, they were so painful that we needed something to relieve the pain, and we did not have to guess what the pain reliever was.

In taking Steps Four through Nine, we aimed at getting to the roots and causes of our disease and to taking action that could lead us to a point of greater contentment and comfort. So that we no longer even needed to act out to relieve the pain, because the emotional pain itself had lessened.

It had been our experience that it really didn't matter what our intention or attitude was when we took Step Four, or what our ideas were as to what it would do for us and how. What mattered was that we took the Step honestly and to the best of our ability. We stopped rationalising that we'd complete Step Four better if we did it later - or after being in program a little longer - or any of the other excuses that all of us who had gone before us had tried!

As sex and love addicts, we all wanted to excel - really excel - at some activity or other. A thorough Fourth and Fifth Step could bring us great relief and comfort. It could lead to a real joy in living - something that we hadn't experienced for a long time, if ever, or something that we had been searching for but couldn't find.

In writing our Step Four we remembered that we were not being graded on spelling, punctuation or grammar. This Fourth Step was for our eyes only. We were going to read it to someone, but this document was for us. If we felt the urge to erase something, we tried not to, it might be one of the keys that would unlock some important piece of information from our past. We tried to remember, "We can't make a perfect inventory, but we can do your best."

We tried not to tear up any part of our inventory. If we felt the statement we made was wrong, we made a note as to why it was wrong. We promised ourselves to be honest and fearless. We tried to just keep making progress and gradually work through our resentment and fears.

We trusted fellow members when they told us that the rewards from completing our Step Four would be great. Some of us got discouraged because we didn't feel we had become honest enough, or couldn't remember everything that had happened to us. We did our best - our honest best. No-one could remember every incident of their lives, so we wrote down what we could remember.

Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book, stated on page 65, "We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty." Many of us found that it helped to carry around a pocket notebook so that we could jot down anything that popped into our heads. We arranged to have a safe place to put our Fourth Step Inventory. We didn't leave anything out because "someone might see it who isn't supposed to". In Step Four, we put down all the things that we winced at - that just remembering them, we screwed our eyes closed and thought, "Oh no, not that." We just wrote them down. They weren't hurting anyone but us.

Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book, referred to "wreckage of your past". From this we were tempted to deal only with the problems left in the wake of our sex and love addiction, the problems outside of us. But Steps Four and Five dealt with how the past had affected our world within. How our negative feelings about ourselves and others had affected us spiritually, mentally and physically. *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, instructed us to write about our fears, resentments and our harms done due to sexual misbehaviour and other damaging behaviours.

Thoroughness was the watchword when taking inventory. In this connection, we wrote it out to get clear thinking and an honest appraisal. It was our first tangible evidence of our complete willingness to move forward.

We tried to stop telling ourselves that we needed to get in the right mood to take this Step. We were in the right mood to take this Step when we were ready to stop hurting and wanted to get well. All of our lives, we had tried to "think our way into right action". This time, we had to "act our way into right thinking". We who had taken this Step could tell that it worked.

We did not know how it worked before we took it and we couldn't tell how it worked after we took it, so we stopped worrying about that.

What we sought was not mere "relief" (we would get that, no doubt), what came was a real joy in living.

We came to believe that we could reach this joy. A giant step toward getting it was to dump the accumulated garbage that we were carrying around. So, we got out our pen and paper and began!

Our inventory was split into four parts: review of resentments; review of fears; review of sex conduct; and review of harms other than sexual.

The questions that follow were designed to be used as a prompt in case we might have forgotten something. They were merely a mechanism for triggering the relevant information. They were not exhaustive.

Prompts for Resentments

- 1) If your parents fought/fight, did/do you resent it?
- 2) List all the feelings of resentment you had/have toward your parents.
- 3) Did/do you resent your status in the family? (i.e. only child, youngest child, oldest child, twin etc.)
- 4) Try to remember each successive grade/year in school and as you do, write out the resentments you felt towards teachers, pupils, and anyone else. Write about any fights, slights, hurts and embarrassments.
- 5) Did/do you resent your church, relatives, friends of parents? If so, list them. No resentment is too small to mention.
- 6) Did you resent leaders, either physical or mental leaders? Did you resent not being the most handsome or beautiful person at school?
- 7) Did you resent not being a part of a crowd? Or not being a leader? Or not being "in"?
- 8) Did/do your parents compare you to other family members or friends? Did/do you resent them for wanting you to be like someone else?
- 9) Do you resent the responsibilities of marriage and family?
- 10) Do you feel that the world owes you a living?
- 11) If revenge were possible right now, who would be the top people on your list? Why?
- 12) In business relationships, write out your resentments toward bosses and co-workers. Do you feel jealous of them? List all the negative feelings you have about the people involved in your work life.
- 13) If you are divorced or getting divorced, write out any resentments about the situation and the people involved, fears and guilt concerning your relationship with your spouse and your children.
- 14) What resentments do you still have?
- 15) Do you feel resentment towards another SLAA member?
- 16) Do you argue with people? Is it important for you to be "right"? Do you become angry when people don't see things the way you do?

- 17) Do you resent others who don't seem to have problems finding happiness?
- 18) Do you resent people who can act around sex and love in ways that you can't?
- 19) Are you hostile because you don't like the hand life has dealt you?

Prompts for Fears

- 20) Were you threatened by the bogeyman or the devil, etc? If so, what are your fears in this regard?
- 21) Were you afraid of the dark?
- 22) How do you react to conflict?
- 23) If your parents fought/fight, did/does it scare you?
- 24) Were you afraid of storms?
- 25) List all the feelings of fear you had toward each person in your life as a child. If any of these fears remain, add them to your list.
- 26) Do you fear any particular type of person?
- 27) What is your greatest fear?
- 28) Are you afraid of being sexually rejected?
- 29) If you are divorced or getting divorced, write out any fears about the situation and the people involved.
- 30) Are you afraid of getting too close to another person for fear of being rejected?
- 31) Are you miserly with money? What are your fears concerning money? Do you spend with no thought of tomorrow?
- 32) What kind of things do you waste most time worrying about - the future or the past?
- 33) What are your present fears? List them.
- 34) Did fear and inferiority about fitness for your job destroy your confidence and fill you with conflict?

Prompts for Own Sexual Conduct

- 35) In your life have there been any significant or negative consequences from acting out sexually? List any harms done to self or others (e.g. unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases).
- 36) Have sexual relations resulted in abuse to yourself or others?
- 37) When, how and in just what instances did your selfish pursuit of sex relations damage other people and yourself? What people were hurt and how badly? Did you spoil your marriage and injure your children? Did you jeopardise your standing in the community? Did you insist that you were the pursued and not the pursuer, and thus absolve yourself?

- 38) How have you reacted to frustration in sexual matters? When denied, did you become vengeful or depressed? Did you take it out on other people?
- 39) If there was rejection or coldness at home, did you use this as a reason for promiscuity?
- 40) Do you use sex as a punishment or reward? Are you careless of your partners' feelings?
- 41) Write on all sexual experiences not previously discussed, especially those which made you feel uncomfortable.
- 42) Do you engage in sex in order to build your own ego by a feeling of conquest?
- 43) Are you or have you been involved in a love affair that could bring yourself or others harm?
- 44) Have you deprived yourself and others of touch and sensual experiences through your sexual or social anorexia?
- 45) Have relationships or marriages come to an early conclusion, or conflict arisen as a result of your inability to participate sexually?
- 46) Have you pushed people away or deprived yourself in terms of relationships?
- 47) Have you lied to yourself and others by pretending to want sex, or to enjoy sex in order to please others and not face your own sexual reality?

Prompts for Harms other than Sexual

- 48) List the first time you ever stole anything. Inventory all your thefts. Don't forget to include employers' time and harmonious relationships that you had and that you have destroyed.
- 49) Were you a troublemaker? If so, in what way? Did you destroy property?
- 50) What kind of lies did you tell? If people were hurt as a result, list them on your review of harms other than sexual.
- 51) Were you unreliable as a friend, breaking off relationships without any explanation when something or someone who seemed better came along?
- 52) Did you set one member of your family against another?
- 53) If you married a cold, unloving person, ask yourself why you chose that one to be your mate? Did you use it as an excuse to find new romances? Was your mother or father cold and unloving and is this your chance to get even with them through your spouse?
- 54) Do you write bad cheques (or electronic equivalent)?
- 55) Do you use people to get what you want? Do you perform "character assassination" on others in order to "make it" in the social or business world? Or do you do this to feel superior?
- 56) Do you have a pattern of getting sick? Be honest. Do you use illness as an excuse to avoid responsibilities or get attention or sympathy or to get out of a jam?
- 57) If you are divorced or getting divorced, write out any guilt you have about the situation and the people involved. What harm have you caused?

- 58) Do you misuse your expense account or food allowance to buy personal things?
- 59) What kind of things do you lie about the most?
- 60) Do you find yourself punishing your children for the wrong reasons? List the harms you have done to your children.
- 61) Are you cold and indifferent to your family, friends, work, and your own needs?
- 62) Do you threaten others by saying that you can't maintain Bottom-Line sobriety if you don't get your family back, your own way, etc?
- 63) Do you gossip or make up things about other people's behaviour?
- 64) Did you have such unprincipled ambition that you double-crossed and undercut your associates?
- 65) Were you extravagant? Did you recklessly borrow money, caring little whether it was repaid or not? Were you a penny-pincher, refusing to support your family properly?

Facing ourselves honestly

We found that the most common symptoms of emotional insecurity were worry, anger, self-pity and depression. These stemmed from causes which sometimes seemed to be within us, and at other times came from without. To take inventory in this respect, we had to carefully consider all personal relationships which brought continuous and recurring trouble. We remembered that this kind of insecurity may have arisen in any area where instincts were threatened. Questions asked in our inventory to find answers for this kind of insecurity ran like this:

- Looking at both past and present, what sex situations have caused us anxiety, bitterness, frustration, anger, or depression?
- Appraising each situation fairly, can we see where we have been at fault?
- Did these perplexities beset us because of selfishness or unreasonable demands?
- Or, if our disturbance was seemingly caused by the behaviour of others, why do we lack the ability to accept conditions we cannot change?

These were the sort of fundamental inquiries that disclosed the source of our discomfort and indicated whether we were able to alter our own conduct and so adjust ourselves serenely to self-discipline.

Suppose that financial insecurity constantly aroused these same feelings. We asked ourselves to what extent had our own mistakes fed our gnawing anxieties, and if the actions of others were part of the cause, what could we do about that? If we were unable to change the present situation, would we be willing to take the measures necessary to shape our lives to conditions as they were?

Suggested Structure for a Step Four Inventory

Below is an example of a Step Four Inventory first used in an early version of the SLAA HOW Sponsorship guide. It was not the only worksheet used by SLAA HOW members. Each sponsor had their own Step Four Inventory and explained their worksheet to us. But all worksheets were similar. As we filled in the columns for each part, we wrote the appropriate data in the first three columns of the relevant review. For instance, if we had a resentment against our neighbour for playing loud music, we wrote, “neighbour” in column 1 of Review of Resentments, and, “plays loud music” in column two. In the third column we wrote down what part of ourselves was affected by our resentment. It was fundamental to recognize that in the first columns we were looking at what we considered were wrongs against us by others, and that in the last columns we focused on our part and became willing to admit our wrongs in action and in thinking and becoming willing to set these matters straight. In our last column we looked at where we had been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking or afraid.

Different sponsors made varying suggestions about how and in which order the columns were completed.

I Resent	Because	This affects my

My part

Column 1: Resentment

List all people, places, things, institutions, ideas or principles with whom I am angry, resent, feel hurt or threatened by. (Include your addiction and yourself.)

Strength & Duration

Indicate in column one both the Strength (S 1-10) and Duration (D 1-10) of the Resentment.

S: Does it burn with heat of a thousand suns (10)? Or would it just tickle your ear (1)?

D: Does it say good night to you and greet you in the morning (10)? Or does it just pop into your mind now and then (1)?

Column 2: Because

What happened? Be specific as to why I was wounded or angry.

Column 3: Affects my...

How did it make me feel? Specifically, how did it affect the seven parts of self?

- P - Pride
- SE - Self-esteem
- PR - Personal relations
- SR - Sexual relations
- A - Ambitions
- S - Security
- F - Finances

Column 4: My Part

What did I do, if anything, to set in motion trains of circumstances, which in turn caused people or institutions to hurt me and eventually led to my resentment of them for doing so?

What's the truth here? Where was my responsibility in this relationship? What might I have done instead? Where was I at fault?

- S - Selfishness
- D - Dishonesty
- SSF - Self-seeking / Frightened
- I - Inconsiderate

Include other character defects.

I Resent

I list people, myself, institutions, addictions, ideas or principles with whom I am angry, resent, feel hurt or threatened by. Complete one page per resentment. Write on back if needed.

Because

What happened? Be specific as to why I was wounded or angry.

Strength (scale of 1 - 10)?

Does it burn with heat of a thousand suns (10)?
Or would it just tickle your ear (1)?

Duration? (scale of 1 - 10)?

Does it say good night and greet you in the morning (10)?
Or does it just pop into your mind now and then (1)?

This affects my

How did it make me feel? Specifically, how did it affect the seven parts of self?

P - Pride

SE - Self-esteem

A - Ambitions

PR - Personal relations

SR - Sexual relations

S - Security

F - Finances

My part - what did I do?

Putting out of mind the wrongs others have done, I resolutely look for my own mistakes. What did I do, if anything, to set in motion trains of circumstances, which in turn caused people or institutions to hurt me and eventually led to my resentment of them for doing so?

My part - where was I to blame?

What's the truth here? Where was my responsibility in this relationship? What might I have done instead? Where was I at fault?

S - Selfish

D - Dishonest

SSF - Self-seeking /
Frightened

I - Inconsiderate

Character Defects

List or describe the character defects involved. Refer to the common defects table.

I Fear	Because	This affects my

My part

Column 1: Fear

List all people, places, things, institutions, ideas or principles that I fear. Include relapse.

Strength & Duration

Indicate in column one both the Strength (S 1-10) and Duration (D 1-10) of the Resentment.
 S: Does it burn with heat of a thousand suns (10)? Or would it just tickle your ear (1)?
 D: Does it say good night to you and greet you in the morning (10)? Or does it just pop into your mind now and then (1)?

Column 2: Because

What are they going to do to me? Will I be hurt? Am I going to lose my job, a relationship, money? Am I going to prison? Will I lose face?

Column 3: Affects my...

On my fears list, I set opposite each name the part of self that is affected or threatened.
 P - Pride
 SE - Self-esteem
 PR - Personal relations
 SR - Sexual relations
 A - Ambitions
 S - Security
 F - Finances

Column 4: My Part

Putting out of mind the wrongs others have done, I resolutely look for my own mistakes. What did I do (if anything) to set the ball rolling, and set in motion trains of circumstances which have led to my being in the position to have the fear? Which character defects caused me to do what I did, or cause me to want to hold on to the old fear, even though I may have done nothing to cause it?
 S - Selfishness
 D - Dishonesty
 SSF - Self-seeking / Frightened
 I - Inconsiderate
 Add your own character defects to this list..

I Fear _____ List all people, places, things, institutions, ideas or principles that I fear or are threatened by. Complete one page per fear. Write on back if needed.

Because _____ What are they going to do to me? Will I be hurt? Am I going to lose my job, a relationship, money? Am I going to prison? Will I lose face?

Strength (scale of 1 - 10)?
Does it burn with heat of a thousand suns (10)?
Or would it just tickle your ear (1)?

Duration? (scale of 1 - 10)?
Does it say good night and greet you in the morning (10)?
Or does it just pop into your mind now and then (1)?

This affects my _____ How did it make me feel? Specifically, how did it affect the seven parts of self?

P - Pride

SE - Self-esteem

A - Ambitions

PR - Personal relations

SR - Sexual relations

S - Security

F - Finances

My part - what did I do? _____ Putting out of mind the wrongs others have done, I resolutely look for my own mistakes. What did I do (if anything) to set the ball rolling, and set in motion trains of circumstances which have led to my being in the position to have the fear?

My part - where was I to blame? _____ Which character defects caused me to do what I did, or cause me to want to hold on to the old fear, even though I may have done nothing to cause it?

S - Selfish

D - Dishonest

SSF - Self-seeking /
Frightened

I - Inconsiderate

Character Defects _____ List or describe the character defects involved. Refer to the common defects table.

I Hurt	Description	This affects my

My part	What should I have done?

Column 1: Harms/Hurts

List by name the people or group of people that I harmed by my acting out. Include yourself. Indicate if this is a:
 S - Sexual Harm
 O - Other Harm

Column 2: Description

What did I do to cause harm?

Column 3: Affects my...

Which part of self caused me to do what I did? Was it caused by the social instinct, the security instinct, or the sex instinct? Write about each instinct separately.

Column 4: My Part - what did I do? Where was I to blame?

What feelings did I create in others? Did I arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness, anger, desire to retaliate, fear, etc.?

- J - Jealousy
- S - Suspicion
- B - Bitterness
- A - Anger
- R - Desire to Retaliate

Column 5: What should I have done instead?

Which Character Defect caused me to do what I did, and what would it have been better to do?

- S - Selfishness
 - D - Dishonesty
 - SSF - Self-seeking / Frightened
 - I - Inconsiderate
- Add your own character defects to this list..

I Hurt

List by name the people or group of people that I harmed by my acting out. Complete one page per harm. Include yourself. Write on back if needed.

Nature of the harm

Sexual

Other kind of harm

Description

What did I do to cause harm?

This affects my

Which part of self caused me to do what I did? Was it caused by the social instinct, the security instinct, or the sex instinct?

Social instinct –

Security instinct –

Sex instinct –

My part - what did I do?

What feelings did I create in others? Did I arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness, anger, desire to retaliate, fear, etc.?

My part - what should I have done instead?

My part - where was I to blame?

Which character defects caused me to behave the way I did?

S - Selfish

D - Dishonest

SSF - Self-seeking /
Frightened

I - Inconsiderate

Character Defects

List or describe the character defects involved. Refer to the common defects table.

Guide to Step Five

Step Five: "Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

In Step 5 we read our Step Four Inventory. It was up to us to decide with whom we wished to take this Step. It was common to do it with a sponsor but this was not a requirement. Some of us chose a therapist, a member of the clergy or a close friend. Our sponsor sometimes helped us make this choice by referring us to the literature and by advising us to seek guidance from our Higher Power. Whatever our choice, it was respected. We were choosing someone with whom we felt safe to make ourselves vulnerable and to share some of our innermost secrets, perhaps things that we had not felt able to share with anyone else. We were placing great trust and confidence in that person.

If that person was our sponsor, it was crucial that they respected that confidence. Sponsors who heard a Step Five had to ensure that the information they obtained was kept confidential between us and was not revealed to anyone, ever, unless we agreed.

It often took many hours to complete a Step Five, so we often did this in a few sessions. For most of us Step Five was a transformational experience, and one that could be often exhausting and emotionally draining. It could leave us feeling triggered and vulnerable, so it was important that we took our needs into account when arranging the Step Five process. Some of us went to a meeting or made outreach calls at the end of each Step Five reading or did a Top Line such as going to the cinema with a friend. It was important to complete this Step without undue delay. Our sponsor therefore needed to be available as much as reasonably possible to go through and hear this Step with us.

Our sponsor's role when hearing a Step Five was mainly to listen. They were not a parent, therapist or confessor. However, at appropriate times, they shared their own experience, strength and hope. For example, telling us, "I've done that too", or "That's exactly the way I felt", if it helped us reveal things we found embarrassing. However, our sponsor avoided trading "war stories" or embarking on their own Step Five. This was our inventory and we needed to be given the time and space to share it.

Occasionally, during a Step Five, it became clear that we had not completed our Step Four inventory or had completed it, or part of it, incorrectly. If that happened then our sponsor suggested that we go back to Step Four and complete the inventory, specific resentment or the relevant part, before carrying on with Step Five. If it was a relatively small thing it could be done, then and there.

Before commencing this Step, we read the following:

- ✓ The first four pages of Chapter Five (Into Action) in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book
- ✓ Step Five in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text
- ✓ Step Five in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

Sometimes our sponsor asked us to read the entire inventory in one session, other times we read it as we wrote it, and in other cases we read only key parts. This was agreed between Sponsor and Sponsee.

In all cases, once we had completed reading out our inventory, we read page 75 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. As recommended, we found somewhere where we could be quiet for an hour and reflect on the Steps we had taken so far. We had just taken a significant Step in our recovery. Our sponsor sometimes felt it was appropriate to share how they felt after taking the Step and let us know that it affected different people in different ways. They let us know that it could take a few days, or longer, for us to fully process the effects of Step Five.

Guide to Steps Six to Twelve

These questions were designed to assist those of us working the program from Steps Six to Twelve. Before embarking on the following Steps, we needed to have completed Step Five. These questions were designed to help us become more familiar with the Steps that were the key to our recovery.

Many of us found that it was essential to continue using our tools of reading and writing in order to stay within the program.

These questions were only suggestions and were an optional way to work the program, they were not a requirement.

- ✓ Before answering each set of questions, we were advised by our sponsor to read the appropriate Step chapter in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text.

After completing Step Six and Seven we met with our sponsor to read out our answers to the questions.

We also met again after Steps Eight and Nine - and in this meeting we agreed on the list of amends.

Finally, we met after completion of Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve.

Step Six

Step Six: "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

Additional suggested reading: *Drop the Rock*.

- 1) Read pages 75-76, Chapter 6 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. Make a list of the character defects that you are ready to have God remove.
- 2) Do you truly believe that your own willpower will not work with sex and love addiction?
- 3) Has your obsession with sex and love/relationships vanished? If not, what steps can you take? If yes, why? What can you do to bring about the permanent removal of the obsession?
- 4) Read from *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, the first paragraph of page 66 and all of page 67. Pick a defect of character that seems to be troubling you such as a resentment or jealousy of a person, place, or thing, or perhaps pride or procrastination. Ask yourself if you are entirely ready to give it up. If you are, then it is time to take Step Seven. If you are not ready, make a list of the reasons why you would like to give it up. Then make a list of the reasons why you still want to keep that defect. What are the payoffs for giving the defect up? What are the payoffs for keeping it? Now, ask God to help you to be willing to give this character defect up.
- 5) What does the concept of "patient improvement" (page 65 in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*) mean to you as stated in Step Six?
- 6) Make a list of your "No, I can't give this up yet" items. Refer to the seven deadly sins (page 48 in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*). Why is it necessary to make a beginning and keep trying?
- 7) Discuss and reflect on the potential consequences in terms of your addiction of putting off right action.

- 8) List the character defects you really enjoy that “masquerade” as something other than they are. Now make a list of your positive character assets. Check and see if any “positives” are really “masquerading” negatives. Write on what this question has meant to you.

Step Seven

Step Seven: “Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.”

Additional reading material: *Drop the Rock* and *As Bill Sees it* – available in a separate document.

- 1) Read *As Bill Sees It* pp. 22, 61, 75. How has working the Twelve Steps helped you work through fear?
- 2) Do you truly understand humility? Read Step Seven in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on how humility has affected your life.
- 3) Read from, *As Bill Sees It*, page 139 “Basis of all Humility”, and page 212, “Faith and Action”. Discuss and reflect on the act of:
 - (a) humbly asking God to remove defects
 - (b) having faith that is vital, accompanied by self-sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action.
- 4) The mental hygiene and spiritual housecleaning we have started in our inventories and continued in Step Five reach their climax in Step Seven. Read pages 48, 103, 136, 196, 281, 327 in, *As Bill Sees It*. Are you ready to fully subject your will to God? Do you wish to surrender all your moral imperfections?
- 5) What has there “never been enough of” for you?
- 6) How do you make, or how can you make honesty, tolerance and true love of mankind and God the daily basis of living?
- 7) Do you still place self-reliance first and are you still rebellious?
- 8) How can humility give us serenity?
- 9) How does the taking of the Seventh Step aid in the reduction of ego?
- 10) Make a gratitude list of what God has done for you that you could not do for yourself.
- 11) What unreasonable demands have you made upon others, yourself and God? How did self-centred fear play a part?
- 12) What proof have you had that other problems besides “the deadly obsession” (Step Seven, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*) of sex and love addiction can be banished?

Step Eight

Step Eight: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all."

Additional reading material: *Came to Believe*.

- 1) Read, "No Man is an Island", page 118 in *Came To Believe* Why is it necessary you make a list of all persons you have harmed and become willing to make amends before you can start relating harmoniously to God and to other people?
- 2) What emotional harm have you done to yourself?
- 3) What kinds of harm have you done to others? What personality traits have injured you and disturbed others?
- 4) Construct a long list of people who have been affected by your behaviour - this can be in a positive as well as in a negative way. This will form the basis of your amends list for Step Nine.
- 5) Why is forgiveness of the utmost importance in working Step Eight?
- 6) Why is the taking of this Step "the beginning of the end of isolation" (Step Eight, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*) from our fellows and God?

Guide to Step Nine (with some overlap with Step Eight)

Step Nine: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

Once we had taken the first Eight Steps, we were ready to embark on building better relationships with others by taking responsibility for our behaviour in Step Nine. We read this guide before starting the questions for Step Nine. We found it to be a useful resource in assisting us to identify what was a harm, and what constituted an amend (or not) and how the amend could be made. We took these suggestions from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and the experience of other seasoned members who had worked the H.O.W approach and had shared SLAA's experience, strength and hope.

We found we could work Steps Eight and Nine best as a joint effort with our sponsor.

Sometimes our sponsor required us to check in with them before and after each amends. This check in was sometimes used to review the purpose of our amends and the agreed approach - what would be said and what not. It was also sometimes helpful to discuss how to word things. Or it could also be used to remind us that forgiveness may not be forthcoming and indeed the amends may be met with hostility.

Finally, after the amends, our sponsor sometimes found it appropriate to ensure we check back in to review the process and/or to share the blessings and relief that came from an amends well made.

The Nature of Harms

We found that harms were when we inflicted physical and emotional suffering, caused a loss of money or time to others, or damaged property. In addition, interfering with another's spiritual growth and path by engaging in rescuing behaviour such as preventing a crisis, doing something someone should do for themselves and stopping someone from taking the consequences of their actions could also be considered a harm.

When Not to Make an Amend

“If the amend would actually make it harder for us to be of maximum service to God and the people around us, we need to be careful, and consult with others and God,” *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s Big Book, page 80 paragraph 1. For example:

- If a person was not aware that we had harmed them, then we did not make an amend as drawing the matter to their attention might be a harm in itself.
- Other examples included causing ourselves to be unemployable or costing taxpayers’ money through court cases, etc., or placing those dependent on us financially in a worse financial position.

Making the list

Once we had defined a harm, we placed the harm into sections for each person and formed a list as follows:

- 1) The name
- 2) The action taken
- 3) What should have been done instead
- 4) Who suffered as a result and how (the how is outlined in the definition of the harm above)?

Reviewing the list

We then reviewed the list of people with our sponsor with a view to identifying who suffered and what actions needed to be taken. In reviewing the list, the nature of the proposed amends and form of the amends was defined.

Types of Amends

Direct Amends

We defined direct amends as those amends that could be made if the person consented to be contacted and no further harm would incur to them through direct contact.

Living amends

We defined living amends as those amends that could be made to those people that were in our lives so that, from the point of the amends on, we changed how we related to them. Where a person could not be contacted, the living amends consisted in a change to our behaviour from that time forward towards ourselves and towards the person we had harmed. Sometimes a direct amend was appropriate first, followed by the continuous behaviour of a living amends.

We found there was no need to continue to make amends for the same wrongdoing, but to live the amends in interaction with those harmed.

Indirect amends

We defined indirect amends as those amends that we made to people we had harmed but that we could not make direct amends to because that person was dead, unable to be reached, their identity was not known or remembered, or the nature of the suffering made it inappropriate. In such cases an

appropriate amends became a donation to a charity, writing a letter, or changing behaviour towards ourselves and others as a way to deal with the amends in question.

Making Amends

Our sponsor provided support during the amends process. Some of us discussed timelines to help combat complacency. Some of us made direct amends by seeking to make an appointment either by calling the person, writing to them, emailing, texting or making contact by some other means and asking them if they were willing to meet us.

The process of making amends had the following components:

- 1) Description of our recovery (where appropriate)
- 2) Admitting fault - this is the harm and the nature of the suffering
- 3) Expressing regret
- 4) Asking forgiveness
- 5) Asking if there was anything the harmed person would like to say, and if there was anything else that we did not mention and that still affected them
- 6) Asking how we could make it right

Step Nine Questions

Before embarking on the Step questions, both sponsor and sponsee read Step Nine in Chapter 5 (How It Works) *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, pp. 76- 84, Step 9 in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text pp. 92-96 and in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

Additional Reading: *As Bill Sees It*.

- 1) Read in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, "Freedom from Bondage" pp. 544-553. Write about a resentment you have. How are you using the program to be free of it?
- 2) Do you deeply and honestly search all your motives and actions in your past and present relationships when completing your list of any amends you may need to make? Think carefully of past relationships and any resentment you may have and check your own part in creating these disturbances. Write on at least one of these relationships.
- 3) Read in, "As Bill Sees It" pp. 39, 58, 153. How have righteous indignation and resentment wreaked havoc in your life? How do you handle anger today?
- 4) Read in, "As Bill Sees It", pp. 179 and 286. Discuss and reflect on the idea that nothing pays off like restraint of tongue and pen. How have you used this to avoid conflict?
- 5) Read page 13 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect on your willingness to approach those individuals that you have harmed. Also, discuss and think about what attitude you should have in making an amends.
- 6) Make an amends list to discuss with your sponsor and meet your sponsor in accordance with the guidance for Step Nine. Are you ready to work on making amends? How will you make direct amends on a daily basis?

- 7) Read the 3rd and 4th paragraphs page 76 of Chapter Six of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. Describe the lengths to which you would go for victory over sex and love addiction.
- 8) Besides your sex and love addiction what other defects have you had to live with?
- 9) Have you experienced any of your most severe critics meeting you more than halfway when making admissions and amends? How do you stay in balance when this happens, or does quite the opposite happen?
- 10) Are you delaying making amends because you are afraid? If so, how can you move into the "spirit" of Step Nine as mentioned in the last paragraph of this Step in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*?
- 11) Write on the scariest amends you have to make and how you will move into action to make it.

Guide to Step Ten

Step Ten: "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

Step Ten in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, stated (page 96), "If we were to continue the life-time process of reconciliation and intimacy with ourselves and others, we would need to process life as it was happening, day by day."

On Step Ten our sponsor usually asked us to do a five to ten-minute review and inventory of the day, at the end of each day. We began each daily inventory with remembering and realising that a loving God was present with us. We then asked God to show the truth. It was important we did not beat ourselves up for what we found. We reviewed the day against the following questions - which are set out in pages 86-89 of the *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. We regularly opened this book and re-read these pages as part of our Step Ten process.

- Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest, or afraid? If so, we considered the right action for the next day, in consultation with others, if needed.
- Did we owe an apology? If applicable, we made an apology or amends the next day.
- Had we kept something to ourselves which should have been discussed with another person at once? If so, we took the action of discussing it with them as soon as possible.
- Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better?
- Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?
- We were careful not to drift into worry, remorse, or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others.
- We asked God's forgiveness (and knew that it would be totally given).
- We inquired (of God) what corrective measures should be taken. We kept it simple. If we were new to this or unsure, we checked them out with someone with more experience in the program.

Once the review was completed and actions noted (where needed) we left the review with our Higher Power, we took the action on the morrow, and ceased worrying about the day passed, as the work of reviewing and corrective action had been completed.

Further reading on pp. 86-87 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, directed us, at the beginning of the day, in the following way:

- We asked God to direct our thinking.
- We asked God especially that our thinking be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.
- We considered our plans for the day. If we had none, we asked God to show us how to be useful and draw up plans.
- We considered how the corrective measures from the night before could be applied.
- We asked that God show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness, and love.
- We asked God to show us how we could help anyone who was suffering from sex and love addiction.

- If we faced indecision: we asked God for inspiration, an intuitive thought, or decision. We relaxed and took it easy. We didn't struggle.
- We prayed some set prayers that emphasised the principles of SLAA.
- We read some spiritual literature and asked God to show us how we could apply it to our day.
- Finally, we prayed that we be shown all through the day what our next step was to be, that we be given whatever we needed to take care of such problems. We asked especially for freedom from self-will and were careful to make no request for ourselves only. We asked for ourselves, however, if others could be helped.

If agitated or doubtful:

- We asked God for the right thought or action.
- We constantly reminded ourselves we were no longer running the show.
- We said to ourselves many times each day, "Thy will be done."

Step Ten Questions

Additional reading required: "As Bill Sees It".

- 1) Re-read page 91 in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Write on the concept of progress rather than perfection as it applies to your life today.
- 2) Have you begun to practice justice and courtesy to those you dislike? Write about how you can start practicing these principles.
- 3) Read page 233 in, "As Bill Sees It". Draw up a two-column balance sheet for the day. On one side write the things you've done right - for example, good intentions, good thoughts and good acts. On the other, write the things you feel you could have improved upon.
- 4) Read Step Ten in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, and note down any passages that particularly resonate. Discuss and reflect on these passages.
- 5) Read Step Ten in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect upon the following concept, page 90, "Every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us."
- 6) Read from, "The portion of SLAA meetings..." on page 98 of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, to the end of the paragraph. Discuss and reflect on the importance of getting current.
- 7) Read pages 90-92 in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on the idea that justified anger ought to be left to those better qualified to handle it. How have you dissipated some anger in a healthy way today?
- 8) Read pages 92-95 in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Write about the idea that "pain is the touchstone of spiritual progress." Write about some pain you have been in lately. How did it help you grow?

- 9) Read pp. 84-85, Chapter Six in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. The purpose of Step Ten is to continue our daily inventory and check our daily progress. Name some things you need to guard against if you are to continue your progress.
- 10) Have you stopped trying to make unreasonable demands on the ones you love? Write on the last unreasonable demand and the results of that demand. How do you tell what is reasonable and what is unreasonable?
- 11) Most feelings or defects of character will come under one of six categories: fear, jealousy, anger, resentment, pride and sex. One way to take personal inventory when something disturbs us - as described in page 96 of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text (penultimate paragraph) - is to fold a sheet of paper into three sections. In the first section write, "WHAT IS IT?". In the second section write, "HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?". In the third section write, "WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?". For this question identify a current problem - for example, fear of failure, and write as much as you can about it. Ask yourself, "How does it affect me?". Now ask God, "What can I do about it?". For extra reading, read from, "As Bill Sees It" pp. 39, 65 and 89.
- 12) Are you able to maintain Bottom-Line sobriety "keeping emotional balance and living to good purpose under all conditions?" (Step Ten, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 88). What are some of the ways that you work on keeping emotional balance?
- 13) List your assets and liabilities. How can you convert (Step Ten, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 93), "the pains of failure into assets?" Think of a specific example where you have done this.
- 14) What can you do to stop having emotional hangovers? Write about the last one you had and the state you were in when it was caused.
- 15) How can you acquire the habit of accurate self-appraisal through Step Ten?
- 16) How does the axiom, (Step Ten, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 90), "every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us", relate to you?
- 17) Step Ten, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 90, talks of, "dangerous exceptions" for our recovery. What are your dangerous exceptions?
- 18) How are you developing tolerance?
- 19) Step Ten, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 94 says to, "spot, admit and correct flaws is the essence of character building and good living." In the spirit of this character building, develop a gratitude list now for your "blessings received."

Step Eleven

Step Eleven: "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."

Additional reading required: "As Bill Sees It".

- 1) Read Step Eleven in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text. Discuss and reflect on the idea, page 99, of having "a conscious adult partnership."
- 2) Read from, "As Bill Sees It" pp. 93,108,127, 189, and 243. Discuss and reflect on how taking time daily to set yourself apart with God improves your conscious contact with Him and changes your life.
- 3) Read pp. 85-89 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. How has prayer and meditation helped you to be free of self-will run riot?
- 4) Read, "As Bill Sees It" pp. 33, 117, 101, and 331. Step Eleven is for mental efficiency, for spiritual strength and for physical endurance. What does this mean to you?
- 5) Read page 164 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect on how to "see to it that your relationship with Him is right" and the importance of it for you today.
- 6) Read, "As Bill Sees It" pp. 270 and 172. How do you apply the principle that your recovery depends upon God?
- 7) Read pp. 202 and 250 in, "As Bill Sees It". Discuss the importance of spending daily quiet time alone with your Higher Power. How do you do this in your life on a daily basis?
- 8) Read page 264 in, "As Bill Sees It". Discuss and reflect on the idea that you shall locate your trouble in your misunderstanding or neglect of Step Eleven, prayer, meditation and the guidance of God.

Step Twelve

Step Twelve: "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."

Additional reading required: "As Bill Sees It", "Came to Believe".

- 1) Read Step Twelve in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text. Read the paragraph on page 102 beginning, "We discovered...". Write on your personal experience of how, "our experiences, in addiction, had been transformed into lessons for living of profound depth and durability."
- 2) Read Chapter Seven, "Working with Others" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. Did you have a spiritual awakening? Was it vital to your recovery? When did it take place? Can you define it?
- 3) Read pp. 196 and 263 in, "As Bill Sees It". Reflect on and discuss the idea that the basic antidote for fear is a spiritual awakening.
- 4) Read pp. 449-551 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect on how, "acceptance is the answer to all of our problems."
- 5) Read page 103 in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, first paragraph. How have your views of intimacy and sexuality changed through working the Steps?
- 6) Read, "As Bill Sees It" pp. 3, 5 and 163. Write on how working the program has brought joy to your life.
- 7) Read in the AA publication "Came to Believe" pp. 46,47 and 48, "The Belief will Come" and in, "As Bill Sees It" page 331. Discuss what needs to be done to be most effective in helping those who still suffer.

The Maintenance Questions

These questions were optional. They were designed to support and strengthen our recovery once we had completed the Steps. The questions also helped us maintain the practises of reflection, reading and writing. They were a way to continue sharing with a sponsor and with fellow members we had developed relationships with during the Steps.

Those of us wishing to continue to use a structured approach to maintaining our sobriety worked the Maintenance Questions in conjunction with a sponsor who had completed the Maintenance Questions themselves. We only answered these questions on completion of Steps One - Twelve.

How we used and how we shared the questions was a matter to be agreed on with our sponsor. The questions related to and covered the Twelve Steps.

Depending on the circumstances, once we had completed the Twelve Steps, the Maintenance Questions could also be used as an alternative to re-working the Steps set out in this guide. We found the choice was up to us, our Higher Power and our sponsor.

- 1) “Today is the first day of the rest of your life.” Re-read Step One in, *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA’s Basic Text and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. List the areas of your life that you have surrendered to your Higher Power.
- 2) Re-read Step One in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA’s Basic Text and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. How is admission of powerlessness the first step toward liberation for you? Do you believe the program can liberate you?
- 3) Read Chapter 2 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s Big Book. Write on your feelings regarding the statements made in the italicised paragraph on page 24.
- 4) Read page 43 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s Big Book. Discuss the idea that, “at certain times the sex and love addict has no effective mental defence against the first act out.”
- 5) Read Chapter 6 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s Big Book. Discuss how reaching out and helping someone else can be part of our willingness to have all our defects removed.
- 6) Take time out today and plan a special set of moments during your day. Time alone, time with a friend, time meditating. Discuss and reflect on the idea that we know how to feel bad but we need to learn how to feel good.
- 7) Read Step Two in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on the idea, “this is the rallying point to sanity.”
- 8) Read Chapter 1, “Bill’s Story”, in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s Big Book. “Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning.” Discuss and reflect on the idea that making a new beginning each day is testimony to our belief in a Higher Power.
- 9) Discuss and reflect on how doing service in the Fellowship has kept sanity in your life.
- 10) Read in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s Big Book, pp. 268-76, “Keys to the Kingdom”. Take an inventory of where you feel you are against the Twelve Steps of the program. Discuss what you were like, what happened and what your life is like now.
- 11) Read Step Three in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA’s Basic Text and in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* - Discuss and reflect on the idea that “Willingness is the key” and write what affirmative action you have taken in the last two weeks within the context of the program.
- 12) Read Chapter 4, “We Agnostics” in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s Big Book. Discuss and reflect on the idea that, “the great reality (that) is deep down within us.”
- 13) Read Appendix II, “Spiritual Experience” in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s Big Book. Discuss your awakening or re-awakening spiritually.

- 14) How have you learned to listen to yourself and others and stay quiet within?
- 15) Read the story "Fear of Fear" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect on the idea that our greatest fear is often that we will become a different person.
- 16) Read Step Four in the, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Take a spot inventory that can update the inventory you gave away in Step Five. Discuss defects that have re-arisen, emotions that won't be placed on hold and physical cravings about these two other states.
- 17) Read the Serenity Prayer in Step Three, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 41. Read it four times. Write on what you accept that you cannot change. Then, the things that you have changed. How do you know the difference?
- 18) Read Chapter 5 (How it Works) in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, and the idea that, "men [people] of faith have courage". Discuss and reflect on the courage your faith has given you.
- 19) Discuss how you use the tools of reading, writing and sharing to deal with your reality.
- 20) Read in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, the last paragraph on pp. 68-69, "Now about sex...". Discuss and reflect on what the knowledge of this part of your recovery has done for you.
- 21) Read the story in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, (3rd Edition) "Stars Don't Fall". Discuss and reflect on, "now came the black and endless dismal night..." as it was in your life.
- 22) Read Step Five, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 57, "this is the beginning of true kinship between man and God." Discuss and reflect on how this has continued to be true in your life.
- 23) Read Chapter 6, "Into Action" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, pp. 72-75. Discuss and reflect on what you have learned about fearlessness, humility and honesty. How do you utilise these realities in your life today?
- 24) Review what happened to you when you wrote your inventory - your feelings, your hopes, your defects. Discuss what happened when you finally took Step Five. How did you feel afterward? Is anything still hanging on?
- 25) Read the story, "Promoted to Chronic" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, (3rd edition). Discuss how your disease has made you vulnerable to acting emotionally and compulsively.
- 26) Read Step Six in the *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on the idea that our defects of character can be lifted if we are willing to turn over the burden.
- 27) Re-read Step Six in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on the idea set out in the *AA Big Book* (How it Works) that, "half measures avail us nothing." How are these components of your life - the emotional, physical and spiritual -coming together today?
- 28) Read in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, page 75, 3rd paragraph, "Returning home...". Meditate on this passage, and then answer all the questions posed on page 75, "if we have omitted...mortar without sand". Discuss and reflect on what your answers tell you about yourself.
- 29) Read in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, (4th edition) pp. 301-308, "Physician, Heal Thyself!" How is the SLAA program a testimonial that you do not have to do it alone?
- 30) Read the synopsis of Step Seven in the table of contents in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on the idea that, "He has removed a great deal but there is still work to be done."
- 31) Read Step Seven in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on how taking this Step indicates a change of attitude for you.

- 32) Read, "A Vision for You" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. Write on the concept that God's vision for you includes the concept that you cannot transmit something you haven't got. What must you do to maintain what you have?
- 33) Read in Step Seven, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 75, the prayer, "Of myself I am nothing". Discuss and reflect on what is working in your life and what you must let go.
- 34) Think about Step Seven and consider if you think there is progress in removing your shortcomings. Discuss and reflect on accomplishments and setbacks.
- 35) Read Chapter 17 in the *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book (3rd edition) pp. 439-456, "Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict". Discuss and reflect on the idea that, "If I focus on the answer, the answer increases."
- 36) Discuss and reflect on your ability to apologise. Write down the name of someone who needs an apology from you. Then create an action plan to make that apology.
- 37) Read Step Eight in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Focus on page 78, "These obstacles...are very real". Discuss and reflect on your need (past and present) to control and manipulate others. Be specific.
- 38) Read the "From Farm to City" story in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, (3rd edition). Looking at the section from the quote, "But I laughed...", discuss and reflect on your need to make amends. Have you the willingness to do so?
- 39) Make a list of those persons you have harmed. Is this your first list? What is the difference between this list and prior lists? Are you willing to work this Step?
- 40) Discuss and reflect on how well you deal with "and became willing to make amends to them all." Who was not on your list? Is there anyone you are still emotionally battling with?
- 41) Read the synopsis of Step Nine in the table of contents of, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on the idea that, "prudence means taking calculated chances". How does this translate into, "courage to work my program" for you?
- 42) Read Step Nine in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Write down the name of someone you owe an amends to. What you intend to say and how you intend to contact this individual. Then do it!
- 43) Read pp. 76-84 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, "Now we need more action...". Write on, "The spiritual life is not a theory, we have to live it", reference page 83.
- 44) Someone may reject an amends. Has this happened to you? Please detail what you did and how it was or was not translated into rejection. If you have not experienced this, create a plan for dealing with a rejected amends.
- 45) Read page 87 in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on, "Above all, we should try to be absolutely sure that we are not delaying because we are afraid".
- 46) Discuss and reflect on the idea that, "(only) when your past is settled (can) present challenges be met".
- 47) Read Step Ten in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text. Discuss and reflect on the dangers of self-centeredness.
- 48) Create a "Relationship Inventory". On one side put the name of the individual with whom you are involved (friend, lover, child, family) and, on the other side, discuss your relationship. Next, create another column in which you note whether the relationship works or needs work. What actions does this inventory call for?
- 49) Discuss and reflect on how using the process of reflection recommended in Step Ten keeps us sober. Write out a mental audit for today of the sort recommended by Step Ten.

- 50) Re-read Step Ten in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text. Discuss and reflect on the idea that, "Those who forget their past are condemned to repeat it".
- 51) Read page 105 in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* from, "The moment we catch...purely human affairs." Discuss and reflect on the idea that self-centeredness continues to create problems in your life.
- 52) Read Step Eleven in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on how working Step Eleven is the only way to conquer fear.
- 53) Read in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, pp. 85-88 from the bottom of page 85. Discuss and reflect on how this segment contains instructions on learning how to let go.
- 54) Read pp. 99-101 in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on how you can channel your Higher Power to lift you out of bondage of self and help others.
- 55) Read Chapter Eleven, "A Vision for You", in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect on the idea that, "no amount of willpower could stop this acting out".
- 56) The joy of living is the theme of Step Twelve. Discuss and reflect on what is joyous in your life. How have these things come about?
- 57) Read Step Twelve in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect upon the actions you have taken to carry the message.
- 58) Read Chapter 7 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book. Discuss and reflect on how practicing self-forgetting is the result of not trying so hard. Be specific.
- 59) Read, "Dr Bob's Nightmare" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, pp. 171-181. Focus on pages 180-181, "spend...against a possible slip." How is service to others an insurance policy in your life?
- 60) Read in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book, pp. 544-553, "Freedom from Bondage". Discuss and reflect on the idea that, "I will have peace of mind in exact proportion to the peace of mind I bring to the lives of others." Discuss and reflect on how this becomes, "practicing these principles in all areas of our lives."

The Slip Questions

- 1) Using a dictionary, write down the definitions for each of the following words: life, spirit, spiritual, God, breathe, breathing, meditation, universe, peace, serenity, posture, discipline, prayer, love, hate, anger, sex, pride, resentment, jealousy, read, write, conscious mind, subconscious mind, hearing, speaking, cure, recover.
- 2) Why is it important that I think of myself first?
- 3) Write about the Serenity Prayer. What does it mean to you and how can it help you in your life?
- 4) Discuss the following slogans used in Fellowships: "Live and Let Live", "Easy Does it", "But for the Grace of God Go I", "Let Go and Let God", "One Step at a Time".
- 5) Write on the concept of, "Just for Today".
- 6) Discuss the amount of time you spend or have spent each day compulsively thinking about sex and relationships. What could you do better with this time?
- 7) List the things you want out of life. How many of these things are really important? Why?
- 8) What about your life would you like to change? How would you change it?
- 9) Count your blessings.
- 10) What would you lose by giving up the SLAA fellowship?
- 11) What do you fear? How many of these things are beyond your control?
- 12) Because you have a failure, you are not a failure. Write about this.
- 13) Discuss and reflect on the meaning of love.
- 14) Reverse a negative thought and write on it.
- 15) Discuss and reflect upon the importance of growing up.
- 16) By acting out to punish another, how am I only hurting myself?
- 17) Why don't I want to get well?
- 18) Read pp. 102-104 in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect upon the need for meditation.
- 19) Has the striving or drive for perfection been a realistic goal in my life? How has this helped or hindered me?
- 20) Discuss the dangers of your obsession as you see them - mental, physical and spiritual.
- 21) Can I afford to have my pre-program insanity back?
- 22) In what ways do I look for joy in my life?
- 23) Do I really listen when people talk to me? In what ways?
- 24) "H.A.L.T" stands for hungry, angry, lonely tired. Why is it important to call a halt when we are hungry, angry, lonely or tired?
- 25) Discuss and reflect upon the need for self-worth. List your good points.
- 26) What were my expectations yesterday? Am I realistic about them today?
- 27) How do others in the SLAA fellowship act as your mirror?
- 28) Choose a person to whom you should make amends. How did this amends make you feel?
- 29) Open *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, at random. What does it say? How does it relate to your life today?

- 30) Think of a friend or a fellow you haven't seen in a while. Find their phone number and give them a call. Reflect and write on reaching out.
- 31) We can't love others until we love ourselves. How does this relate to our feelings today? Yesterday?
- 32) Boredom is a bar against learning. Discuss and reflect upon the idea that boredom is part of our disease.
- 33) What does self-awareness bring? Why would you want to remain ignorant?
- 34) How has depriving yourself played a part in your addiction?
- 35) Action is called a magic word. Why is this word important to you today?
- 36) Discuss and reflect upon the idea that we must keep things simple.
- 37) How many people do you fail when you fail yourself?
- 38) By keeping busy how do you avoid yourself? When did you last do this?
- 39) Read Step Six in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 68 particularly. How does the whole Step make you feel?
- 40) Write on what the advantages are when you have Bottom Line sobriety.
- 41) Write on procrastination and the self-sabotage behaviours that may result from procrastination. Give some examples.
- 42) Re-Read Step Three in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA's basic text, and/or in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and write on your feelings.
- 43) Write on what your spiritual rock-bottom was.
- 44) Write on what your physical rock-bottom was.
- 45) Write about what you think your Higher Power's concept of you is?
- 46) What does sex and love mean to you today? How does it affect you now?
- 47) How are compulsivity and your sex and love addiction connected?
- 48) Write on 'giving in' and why you do.
- 49) Write about how fear-based thinking has played a part in your acting in/out. Give some examples.
- 50) Write on your concept of a Higher Power.
- 51) Write on what the SLAA Fellowship means to you.
- 52) With whom are you sharing the load of your recovery?
- 53) When and how did you allow self-pity to rule your life?
- 54) How have you allowed false pride to defeat you?
- 55) Do you allow yourself to be vulnerable? Why/why not? Can you give some examples?
- 56) Read Step Seven in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Write on humility.
- 57) Write on how defiance was a strong part of your life. Have you changed?
- 58) Have you allowed arrogance to play a large part in your life?
- 59) How is your need for control getting in the way of your recovery?
- 60) What changes did you see in yourself before you slipped?

- 61) Read page 268 from, “with trepidation” to page 269, “so I stayed in SLAA”, and then page 121 in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA’s basic text. Do meetings play an important part in your life?
- 62) Read Step Four in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA’s basic text. Have you allowed resentment to take over?
- 63) In our addiction, jealousy and envy played a large part in our lives. In what way can you find some sense of inner contentment through the program?
- 64) Make an inventory of the good things in your life.
- 65) What are the good things that you would like sobriety to bring? How well are you handling your problems today?
- 66) Are you trying too hard to work the program perfectly?
- 67) Read Chapter 2, “There is a Solution” of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s Big Book. What does being well look like to you?
- 68) Write on how you have used sex and relationships to face life.
- 69) Write on following God’s will.
- 70) Write a self-care “to do” list for the day ahead and ask God to help you stick to it. Put at least six things on your list.
- 71) What are your feelings today concerning God, sex and love?
- 72) What is your concept of happiness?
- 73) Discuss and reflect on the idea that making mistakes is part of life.
- 74) What will your life be like in 10 years’ time if you don’t work the SLAA Program of recovery?
- 75) Discuss and reflect on when you think you will have achieved success.
- 76) Discuss and reflect on the idea that everyone has faults.
- 77) Are you afraid of a healthier sex and love life? Discuss and reflect.
- 78) How do you feel if you do something you know to be wrong? Discuss and reflect.
- 79) Are patience and wisdom connected? Discuss and reflect.
- 80) *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA’s Basic Text, (Step Eleven) describes how our Higher Power brings us “many a painful growth fostering situation”. Has this been your experience? Discuss and reflect using examples from your life.
- 81) Am I the master of my emotions? Discuss and reflect.
- 82) Discuss and reflect on how you would like things to be vs how things are.
- 83) *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA’s Big Book, uses the word “we” 1,102 times in the first 154 pages. Why is it important we see SLAA as a “we” program? And what does the word “we” mean to you in this context?
- 84) Putting things off can actually make them harder to do. Discuss and reflect on this idea.
- 85) Discuss and reflect on how increased honesty has changed you as a person.
- 86) In the last 30 days what have you learnt about yourself in the context of your SLAA recovery?
- 87) If a thing is worth doing, it’s worth doing well. Discuss and reflect on this common saying.
- 88) Love and friendship are what bind the fellowship together. Discuss and reflect.
- 89) In recovery, moderation is a way of life. Discuss and reflect.
- 90) Anger combined with pride can cause us real difficulties. Discuss and reflect on this idea.

- 91) Discuss and reflect on what actions you should take when you are wrong and what actions you should take when you are right.
- 92) Sometimes it seems to be the little things that cause us the biggest problems and challenges. Discuss and reflect on this idea.
- 93) Have you harmed yourself through your using? Discuss and reflect.
- 94) Can anger be used for good? Discuss and reflect.
- 95) What one thing would you change in the days preceding your slip?
- 96) Self-pity is harmful. Discuss and reflect.
- 97) Why are you so afraid of yourself? Discuss and reflect.
- 98) Tolerance and intolerance - what do these two words evoke for you?
- 99) Have I truly surrendered to the program?
- 100) How have slip questions helped support me in regaining my sobriety?

Common Misconceptions about SLAA HOW

- 1) **Myth:** If you slip three times your sponsor has to let you go.

This is not true. A sponsor may have this policy, but it is not a requirement of SLAA H.O.W.

- 2) **Myth:** If a sponsee is late with daily calls they are dropped as a sponsee.

This is not true. Learning about boundaries however is an important part of recovery and sponsor and sponsee will need to set acceptable boundaries and consequences between themselves.

- 3) **Myth:** No dating until Step Nine and/or that after Step Nine you have to start dating.

This is not true. It is for the sponsor and sponsee to work together to decide what action is required at what point and whether dating is appropriate taking into account whether addiction or anorexia is being tackled.

The purpose of abstaining from relationships for a period of time, whether addiction or anorexia is present, is to allow the sponsee time to develop a relationship with him/herself and God, to have this vital spiritual experience which is essential for recovery. This spiritual awakening is promised after Step Nine and reaffirmed in Step Twelve.

Rather than set a timeframe on dating, it might be more appropriate to ask if the sponsee feels they have had this vital spiritual experience and that the SLAA promises are coming true in their lives; if they feel a sense of personal wholeness from which they can relate to others. More about the dating decision is set out in the Relationship Top Lines section of this Guide.

- 4) **Myth:** You can't go on to Step Ten until all your amends from Step Nine are completed.

This is not true. How and when Step Nine amends are completed is for agreement between sponsor and sponsee.

- 5) **Myth:** Those working the SLAA HOW concept can't attend or share at a non-HOW meeting, and/or non-HOW fellows can't share at an SLAA HOW meeting.

Again, this is not true.

- 6) **Myth:** A sponsee must wait until Step Eleven to start the daily practice of prayer and meditation.

This is not true. In fact, in the HOW approach the sponsee is encouraged to begin this practice as soon as they commence the first "30 Questions."

- 7) **Myth:** A sponsee can't outreach to an old Sponsor for a set period of time. This is not true.

References

- ✓ *SLAA Sponsorship - A Return from Isolation*
- ✓ *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, SLAA basic text
- ✓ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, AA's Big Book - usually 4th edition, some stories only in 3rd edition, marked in text when this is the case. Available here: <https://silkworth.net/> including Audiobook files.
- ✓ *AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*
- ✓ *SLAA Withdrawal* pamphlet
- ✓ *SLAA 40 Questions for Self-Diagnosis & Questions Beginners Ask*
- ✓ *What is Acting Out? What are Slips? Setting Bottom Lines; Setting Top Lines*
- ✓ *AA Came to Believe & As Bill Sees It*
- ✓ *SLAA HOW Concept and Tools*