

S.L.A.A. HOW

Step and Sponsorship Guide

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An Introduction to S.L.A.A. HOW

In this guide, newcomers will find everything they need to work the program of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (S.L.A.A.) the HOW way – a systematic method for working S.L.A.A.’s Twelve Steps. This guide is designed to help the reader find a HOW sponsor, get sober in S.L.A.A., work the Steps using the HOW approach, and, when they are ready, become a HOW sponsor themselves.

The S.L.A.A. HOW way of working the S.L.A.A. program was inspired by the Overeaters Anonymous (O.A.) HOW approach. At time of writing, HOW still exists within O.A., as well as a separate fellowship called Compulsive Eaters Anonymous (C.E.A.) that also works the Steps the HOW way. The HOW approach is also used by Debtors Anonymous (D.A.).

S.L.A.A. HOW originated in Australia around 1996, when a group of authors from S.L.A.A. began adapting O.A. HOW literature by replacing “compulsive eating and food” with “sex and love addiction,” thereby creating a HOW approach for S.L.A.A. The authors believed that S.L.A.A. would benefit from a structured and disciplined approach to help members who were struggling to define and maintain sobriety. These founding members adopted the entire O.A. HOW program, including the format, tools, and writing assignments for Steps One to Twelve. Where O.A. HOW used a specific food plan to define abstinence, the S.L.A.A. HOW authors created questions for the first seven days to define bottom lines so that, in consultation with their sponsors, members could define the addictive behaviors that they chose to abstain from in order to begin recovering from sex and love addiction.

The S.L.A.A. HOW way of working the Steps has spread across the world and become a successful approach in many countries. S.L.A.A. HOW meetings can now be found in many places, including Australia, Thailand, Singapore, China, Taiwan, the U.K., many countries in Europe and the Middle East, and the U.S.A. This expansion in popularity speaks to the success of working the program the HOW way.

The acronym HOW originated in *Alcoholics Anonymous* — AA’s Big Book. We found a reference in the story, “Freedom from Bondage of Self” (Fourth Edition, page 549):

The A.A. 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.

We found the three words also mentioned in the appendix, *Spiritual Experience* (Fourth Edition, page 568): “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.*”

S.L.A.A. HOW is a Choice

There is no requirement to work the S.L.A.A. program the HOW way; it is merely a choice for those who wish to and who find that it helps them. There are other ways of working the S.L.A.A. program and we make our choice before beginning to work the Steps. Those of us who decide to work the S.L.A.A. program with the S.L.A.A. HOW approach follows the structure described in this Step and Sponsorship Guide. The choice to work the Steps this way is an individual one.

All S.L.A.A. HOW meetings are open to anyone working the S.L.A.A. program — even if they are using a format other than HOW. Additionally, people using the S.L.A.A. HOW approach can attend any S.L.A.A. meeting, not only S.L.A.A. HOW meetings.

In S.L.A.A. HOW, everything associated with working the S.L.A.A. Twelve-Step program applies, including all Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts, and all conference-approved S.L.A.A. literature. Like S.L.A.A., the HOW way of working the Steps also suggests that sponsees work through the Twelve Steps, attend meetings, and work with a sponsor. S.L.A.A. HOW is a way of working the Twelve Steps. It is not a different program.

The HOW Concept

There were, and still are, no absolutes for sobriety in S.L.A.A., as individual patterns of sex and love addiction vary. We remember that the S.L.A.A. HOW groups were formed to suggest an alternative path to long-term sobriety for those of us who had tried other ways of working the S.L.A.A. program and were unsuccessful, for those of us who knew that we needed this kind of approach, and for those of us who were not experiencing the level of joy and sobriety we had hoped for.

Therefore we accepted our bottom-line sobriety, Step questions, Maintenance Questions, outreach calls, the Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts, and other tools as requirements for our recovery. We committed ourselves to a black-and-white sobriety in order to deal with the gray areas of living.

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

How the HOW Approach Works

We begin the HOW approach by answering the seven questions for defining bottom lines. We answer one question a day, working with a sponsor (an S.L.A.A. HOW member whom we have asked to guide us). We normally call our sponsor at an agreed time every day and read our answer to them over the phone. For many of us, this approach offers a welcome safety net, a sense of security, and a structure to our new lives in recovery. It can seem difficult at times, but we value the structure this provides. After answering the first seven questions, most of us are clearer about the actions we need to avoid, or start taking, in order to give ourselves a chance to heal from an often exhausting, debilitating disease that can make our lives unbearable. We review our answers with our sponsor and set bottom lines that will serve to heal and support us in our recovery.

After we have answered the bottom-line questions, we proceed to answer the questions for Steps One, Two, and Three – one per day for the next thirty days. Through this process we develop an

understanding and acceptance of the first three Steps. Daily calls with our sponsor, outreach calls to other S.L.A.A. members, the questions, meetings, and trust in our Higher Power are the tools we need to surround us with the strength to keep the addictive patterns out of our lives, one day at a time.

The Tools

Having identified our personal bottom lines with our sponsor, we become sober by abstaining from these behaviors on a daily basis. We consider ourselves “sober” when we have a minimum of thirty consecutive days free from our bottom lines. We refer to S.L.A.A. and A.A. literature to help us in the process of recovery.

We attend at least three meetings per week. These can be regular S.L.A.A. meetings or meetings using the S.L.A.A. HOW approach. During the first seven-day period, it is suggested we make four phone calls each day — one to our sponsor and three outreach calls to other S.L.A.A. members. During the following thirty-day period, this suggestion becomes a requirement. The phone is a lifeline. We need the contact. Each call can be like a mini-meeting.

We practice daily prayer and meditation to develop a relationship with a Power greater than ourselves that can guide and sustain us in recovery, being constantly aware that Higher Power is doing for us what we have never been able to do for ourselves.

Service is freedom from the bondage of self, giving back what we have freely and lovingly received. It is helping out at meetings by setting up chairs, making coffee, volunteering as the spiritual timekeeper, reading a passage at the zoom meeting, or welcoming newcomers. Sobriety is service to ourselves and the group.

An S.L.A.A. HOW sponsor is a sex and love addict who has at least thirty days of continuous sobriety working the S.L.A.A. HOW concept and has taken the first three Steps. Discretion, common sense, and our Higher Power guide us in our selection of a sponsor.

In summary, the way we work the Twelve Steps using the S.L.A.A. HOW approach during Steps One, Two, and Three is as follows:

- We attend at least three meetings per week. These can be regular S.L.A.A. meetings or meetings using the S.L.A.A. HOW approach.
- We make one call per day to our sponsor to discuss our answer to the assigned Step question.
- We make three outreach calls to fellow members in S.L.A.A. daily (optional for the seven-day bottom line identification questions).
- We maintain our bottom-line sobriety.

With the exception of bottom-line sobriety, after the first three Steps, the requirements set out above become suggestions.

Some sponsors and sponsees agree to continue the approach outlined above, others reduce the frequency of required meetings or the number of calls to be made. As Step questions

continue beyond Steps one to three, some sponsees establish new approaches to answering and sharing the answers — for example, by calling their sponsor once or twice a week, or meeting face-to-face to read through all the answers for that Step.

Finding a Sponsor

To start working the Twelve Steps, we need to find a sponsor who has already reached at least Step Three using the S.L.A.A. HOW approach. We have found the best way to do this is to attend as many meetings as possible. These can be meetings that use the HOW approach or not, as long as the sponsor chosen has been sponsored in the S.L.A.A. HOW way. If we are not able to attend face-to-face meetings, or if meetings using the HOW approach are not available in our country or city, we find meetings online. We keep asking until we find a suitable sponsor. We want a sponsor who has worked through the Steps the HOW way, understands the HOW approach, and can share their experience, strength, and hope.

Within the HOW approach, we find that different sponsors work the program in different ways. We talk with them about their expectations before starting to work together in order to see if we are a good fit. We discuss practical matters such as availability or any other issues we anticipate. For many of us, setting bottom lines with our sponsor is the first time in our lives we have consulted anyone about setting healthy boundaries for ourselves. It can be a great relief to have this kind of help. We find that, ultimately, our sponsor is there to listen, guide, encourage, and to share their experience, strength, and hope with us. Sometimes they need to challenge us. In the early stages, some of us find it better to find a “good” sponsor rather than wait for the “perfect” sponsor. The HOW approach requires that a sponsor only sponsor up to the level of the Step they themselves have completed and must have at least thirty days of continuous sobriety.

Sponsoring

A sponsor is someone who works with another member of the fellowship to provide support and guidance in working through the Twelve Steps. An S.L.A.A. HOW sponsor is someone who has worked or is working the S.L.A.A. HOW approach and can guide fellow sex and love addicts in the HOW method.

There are various Step sponsors in S.L.A.A. HOW. A Step Three sponsor, having completed Step Three, can sponsor other fellow members up to Step Three. A Step Five sponsor, having completed Step Five, can sponsor up to Step Five. A Step sponsor can sponsor any Step between Steps Six to Twelve, up until the last Step they have completed. A Maintenance sponsor is someone who can sponsor those who have completed the Twelve Steps in S.L.A.A. HOW. To qualify as a HOW Maintenance sponsor, the fellow member must be a Step sponsor, have completed all Twelve Steps in S.L.A.A. HOW, in addition to completing the HOW Maintenance Questions, and have ninety days of back-to-back sobriety.

Before deciding whether we are ready to be a sponsor, some of us read the S.L.A.A. pamphlet entitled, *Sponsorship, a Return from Isolation*. This is primarily a guide for those seeking sponsors but it helps the prospective sponsors among us too. We also consult our own sponsor and seek guidance from our Higher Power.

As a sponsor, we have to remember that:

- We are not a parent, a therapist, an instructor, or a confessor. We provide guidance; we make recommendations; we provide instructions on working the Steps.
- We share our experience, strength, and hope. We share what has worked for us. We try not to say things like, “What we do in S.L.A.A. is...” or, “What you should do...” Instead, we use phrases like, “What I did was... and this worked for me.” We find it is best to avoid trying to convince the sponsee of anything. Whether they know it yet or not, their Higher Power is guiding them in its own time. We needn’t worry about the sponsee, merely keep them and their struggles in mind.
- We share our program. As much as possible, we make outreach calls focused on the program, our experience of the program, and program literature.
- We share our struggles, avoiding traps of ego, dependence, and reliance, or any combination of these. We trust our Higher Power is helping both of us grow along spiritual lines.
- We share our compassion without judgment or criticism. When the sponsee says they are struggling, feeling the pain of withdrawal, or saying that they have slipped — we express our compassion. We try to say things like, “That sounds painful...” or, “I remember how it felt when I was in withdrawal...” We try not to judge what the sponsee says or does by commenting, “That’s good.” or, “That’s bad.” Rather, we acknowledge what they have shared with us and let them know we have heard them.
- We share our perspective. We convey the importance of service and giving to others.
- We share the concept of “Just for Today” as a means of survival.
- We avoid being drawn into philosophical argument, discussion, or gossip. If we think we are going beyond our responsibility as an S.L.A.A. sponsor, we stop ourselves. We use gentle phrases such as, “I don’t know about that...” or, “If it were me, I would consult my Higher Power.”
- We share our honesty. If we slip or act out, we tell our sponsee; they have a right to know. We don’t shame or isolate ourselves from our sponsee. We pick ourselves up and carry on. We show them how it is done and that we are not superhuman.
- We share with our sponsee the ways in which we are disciplined in our lives. After all, this may be the only example of discipline they have experienced.
- We make sure we are familiar with the HOW concept requirements as set out in this guide. Things not listed in this guide are not requirements of the HOW approach. It is possible that anecdotal requirements can become misconceptions about the HOW approach. Sponsors need to be wary of these and ensure they are fully informed about the HOW concept. A few common misconceptions are listed in the Appendix.

Defining Bottom Lines — First Seven Days

During the first seven days, we work with our sponsor to decide what behaviors we need to stop in order to best support our recovery. We answer one of the bottom-line questions each day and read the answer to our sponsor who is there to listen, gently guide, and give feedback when and if we need it. We answer the questions in order, one per day, confining our work to the appointed day only, so that our answers are as current as possible.

Once we have answered these questions, with the help of our sponsor, outreach calls, and the guidance of our Higher Power, we are able to set our bottom lines. We are addicts, and each of us is unique, so it is important to tailor our bottom lines to our own specific addictive or anorexic behaviors. In order to support our recovery, we also agree to middle-line and top-line behaviors (see page 12 for definitions of these types of behaviors).

To answer the bottom-line setting questions in the first seven days, we need the following books: *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous* (S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text), *Alcoholics Anonymous* (AA's Big Book), and AA's *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. We also need the following S.L.A.A. pamphlets to support our research into our behaviors: *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*.

Here are the seven HOW bottom-line questions and suggestions:

1. Write a definition of sex and love addiction. Read the S.L.A.A. document, *Characteristics of Sex and Love Addiction*. Underline any words or concepts you are unfamiliar with and talk them through with your sponsor. Also underline passages that you identify with or that remind you of your own behavior. Talk these through on your daily outreach calls and also with your sponsor.
2. Read “Step One” from Chapter 4 in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, (pp. 68-70 in the printed first edition). Write on whether you identify as a sex addict, a love addict, or both of these. Referring to examples from your life, include in your written answer how you have acted out in these areas in the past.
3. Read the pamphlet, *40 Questions for Self-Diagnosis*. Tick the behaviors you most identify with. Choose the ten most relevant and write a few sentences on each, using specific examples from your past.
4. Read the S.L.A.A. pamphlet, *Anorexia: Sexual, Social, Emotional*. Write an answer to the question, *Do you relate to any of these behaviors?*
5. Read Chapter 5, “The Withdrawal Experience”, in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text (pp. 104-115 in the printed first edition) and also the S.L.A.A. pamphlet, *Withdrawal: Gateway to Freedom, Hope and Joy*. In your written answer, discuss how you experienced withdrawal in relation to sex and love relationships; for example, when a relationship ended.
6. Read the S.L.A.A. pamphlet, *Romantic Obsession*. Note down anything that is meaningful. In your written answer, discuss and reflect on what you have learned.

Read the sections, “What is Acting Out?” and, “What are Slips?” from the *Questions Beginners Ask* pamphlet. Have you tried to control your compulsive behavior in the past? Write about how, in what way, and why you slipped, and acted out after decisions to behave differently.

7. Read the S.L.A.A. pamphlet, *Setting Bottom Lines* and also the “Top Lines” section in this guide. Write a list of the obvious behaviors that you would consider necessary to list as bottom lines or top lines. Write and reflect on how absolute honesty is necessary to combat sex and love addiction. Next, write a list of more subtle behaviors, sometimes called middle lines, that you suspect may cause you trouble or put you in danger of breaking bottom lines. Discuss these with your sponsor to arrive at bottom-line, middle-line, and top-line behaviors for the 30 day, Steps One to Three period.

Setting Bottom and Top Lines

Bottom Lines

Bottom lines are behaviors we choose to abstain from in order to begin recovering from sex and love addiction. Bottom lines help define our sobriety. They are guidelines for our new life. When we stop the unhealthy behaviors that have made us so unhappy in the past, we begin to experience physical, mental, emotional, sexual, and spiritual wholeness. We start to engage with life.

Bottom-line behaviors seem hard to let go of in the beginning. We believe we cannot survive without our old behaviors, although they have driven us to despair, and, for some, to suicide.

In spite of our reservations and fears that we will not be able to maintain abstinence from our bottom lines, we find that with the help of a sponsor, our peers in recovery, and our program of recovery, we can do it one day at a time.

Some of us come to the program having deprived ourselves of sex, sexual contact, and intimate relationships throughout our lives. If we identify as anorexics in S.L.A.A., then our addiction is about deprivation rather than active misuse of sex and love. As anorexics, we often “act in” rather than “act out.” While acting out is defined as engaging in addictive bottom-line behavior, acting in behavior isolates us or withdraws us from others; it reflects avoidant patterns. These two terms define a wide spectrum of behavior used to avoid building relationships with our Higher Power, ourselves, and others. One person’s acting out could be another person’s acting in because of the individual nature of defining our destructive behavior. But how can we set bottom lines? Once we have found an S.L.A.A. HOW sponsor, we begin to answer the first seven questions set out above. As trust in the relationship with our sponsor develops, we identify the behaviors that are harmful to us and the people around us. The pamphlet, *Setting Bottom Lines*, offers us a plan to help break the destructive cycles of sex and love addiction. At the end of the seven days, we agree on our bottom lines with our sponsor, then begin answering a question each day for the next thirty days.

Top Lines

In contrast to bottom lines, top lines are positive, affirming behaviors that we now choose to include in our lives. They are a tool for sanity when we feel least sane – a way to get out of our head and into our heart. For many of us top lines are the start of living a sober, contented life.

In the past we exerted much time and energy in our acting out or acting in; we didn’t know what a healthy lifestyle looked like or felt like. We had lost the ability to nurture ourselves, to pursue healthy interests and activities. We may also have lost the ability to build friendships with people who were truly available and trustworthy. It matters little if our addiction was compulsively pursuing sex and love or isolating from sex and love, we now know that if we are to truly live beyond the addiction we have to learn new skills.

While some instinctively know what is lacking — for example, spiritual connection, exercise, or food choices — there often seems to be something greater missing from our lives. Some describe it as “purpose,” or a need for learning, creativity, enjoyment, or connection to ourselves and to our community. Some describe it simply as “being in the moment.”

Being in recovery even for a short time brings us some clarity and a feeling of relief. Some begin to use the tools of prayer and meditation. For some of us it is the first time that we fully connect to or experience our past grief or trauma.

We set top lines from the beginning — soft, slow steps towards more positive, reinforcing behaviors. We give ourselves time for peaceful reflection, and some activity (or non-activity) to help process the painful resentment, anger, shame, or fear that has been suppressed for many years.

Top lines can be difficult to put into practice. We acknowledge our powerlessness and work the Steps, practicing progress, not perfection. We pray for courage and ask for support from people we trust.

Some of us view top lines in the same way as bottom lines. So, not adhering to them may be interpreted as a slip or loss of sobriety. Some sponsors suggest that we create at least as many top lines as bottom lines. This helps us replace destructive behaviors with new, healthy ones. Or it might help us begin to open our lives to healthy contact where there is complete or near complete deprivation. Some of us respond to a gentler approach so that some or even all our top lines are defined as guidelines rather than requirements. Ultimately, in defining our bottom lines and top lines, we listen to guidance from our sponsor and our Higher Power.

We keep top lines simple, uncomplicated and focused on the process rather than the end result. We learn it is okay to change top lines if they don't move us toward our recovery goals. We treat ourselves in a loving, gentle, and encouraging way.

Suggestions for Top Lines

The following top lines are recovery-positive suggestions for activities we can incorporate into our daily lives. We review the following sections with our sponsor and make a list that is appropriate for each of us.

Spiritual Top Lines These can include daily readings, reflection, prayer, meditation, mindfulness, Step work, journaling, walking in nature, or visiting a place of worship. Some seek solace or reconnection with their faith by attending an S.L.A.A. retreat or convention, or by visiting a specific place, tree, lake, or rock.

Personal Top Lines These are nurturing or fun activities such as going to a concert or an exhibition, a swimming pool, a park or a particular spot in nature that is special to us. It can be cooking a favorite meal or going to our favorite restaurant or coffee shop on a regular basis. It can be picking up a long abandoned musical instrument or buying ourselves flowers. For some of us, personal top lines are trying a new skill that has nothing to do with our past or with our career, or it might be signing up for a class we have always wanted to take but have never had the time or courage to. Learning to draw, paint, write, sail, sing, cycle, bike, climb,

drive, swim – whatever activity that facilitates growth. Some find regular exercise a safe release for anger – using a punch bag, mattress, or pillow to hit (useful in Step Four). This activity can release anger from the body. If we have experienced a long period of abstinence or withdrawal, having the physical contact of massage is healing. We might seek medical advice and therapy for untreated symptoms that affect our health, our ability to have sex or to be intimate in a relationship. Some of us enter psychotherapy as a way to support our recovery and help deal with the trauma of our past.

Social Top Lines These start with saying “yes” to social invitations from those we trust. If we feel socially anorexic we practice organizing a meet-up (coffee, lunch, cinema, concert, sports game, cycle, run or walk with a group). Some of us sign up for a dance or exercise class, woodwork, carving, bread-making, drumming, self-defense. By engaging with people that we trust, and who are able to help us, we also learn how to tolerate people that we find difficult, challenging, or triggering.

Community Top Lines Sponsoring and doing service in our home groups and intergroup are useful ways to learn about giving. Some of us practice small acts of kindness. Some go on to volunteer in their communities: teaching, coaching, facilitating for a cause that we feel passionate about. We find many needs in our world that can benefit from people like us who have gained personal awareness through recovery. There is a great reward in being able to contribute to the community around us. Giving hope to one person can make a huge difference in their life and ours.

Relationship Top Lines As we move through the Steps and develop a relationship with a Higher Power, and an ability to nurture ourselves, some of us decide to practice healthy behaviors in relationship with others, as well. We initially work on developing friendships or improving relationships with the family (as appropriate). In due course and in consultation with our sponsor, we commence dating or recommitting to a partner, having devised an appropriate plan for dating. We think carefully before commencing romantic relationships, reviewing the robustness of our recovery, the extent of Step work we have committed to, our progress in recovery, and our vulnerability to addiction. The answer as to when and how to work on romantic relationships is entirely a matter of Higher Power direction, individual experience, consultation with our sponsor, and personal journey. Most sponsors don't recommend dating before completing Step Nine, because developing a relationship with our Higher Power and with ourselves are most vital to our recovery, and need to be strong before starting a romantic relationship.

Breaking Bottom Lines - What Are Slips?

In terms of the HOW concept, we define a slip as breaking one of the bottom lines from the list of bottom lines we had previously agreed upon with our sponsor.

Sometimes we act out in ways that haven't clearly been identified or defined in our bottom lines. When this happens, it is not technically a slip. But such acting out provides an opportunity for sponsor and sponsee to discuss the behavior. In reviewing what happened, we gain new insights, potentially identify other addictive behaviors that need to be on our list of bottom lines, and, if appropriate, actually treat it as a slip (see next section “Slip Questions and Sobriety”)

Experience has shown us that slips don't just happen. Most S.L.A.A members who have been through these periods could say that slips can be traced to specific causes. We forget that we are sex and love addicts and can become overconfident or complacent. Or we become too preoccupied with business or social affairs to remember the importance of abstaining from acting out. Or our foundation Steps of One, Two, and Three are not strong enough. Or we let ourselves become tired and are caught with our mental and emotional defenses down. In any event, we withdraw from taking advantage of the help available to us. We cease maintaining our S.L.A.A. lifeline. Getting honest and current with another S.L.A.A. member or at an S.L.A.A. meeting helps us overcome the despair that can arise from slipping, and put our recovery back on track. It may be useful to read about slips in the S.L.A.A., *Questions Beginners Ask* pamphlet.

Slip Questions and Sobriety

An important principle in the S.L.A.A. HOW approach is that, while working the first three Steps and answering the first 30 questions (see pp. 19-23), we maintain 30 days of continuous sobriety. Sobriety in the S.L.A.A. HOW approach is defined as 30 days of abstinence from bottom-line behaviors. Top lines are often not defined as strict sobriety requirements, but they can be if this is deemed appropriate or useful.

If we slip – if we break our bottom lines – we will need to start again. This means regaining our sobriety through daily contact with our sponsor and by answering questions from “Further Thoughts on Sobriety - The Slip Questions” (see list on p.65) for the same number of days that we have been working the Steps. For example, if we are on day 21 of the 30 questions when we break a bottom line, we answer 21 “Further Thoughts on Sobriety” questions and read our answers to our sponsor each day, and then resume the 30-day questions from where we left off. In this case, from day 21. This practice is to support us in reestablishing our sobriety before continuing our Step work. This is a time to pause and reconnect with our Higher Power and our authentic selves. We do this to ensure that our Step work isn't undermined by our addiction, and that we have a solid foundation in Steps One, Two, and Three.

The objective is not to be punitive but to provide us with the support and connection we need to help us through this period of our recovery. With thirty days of continuous sobriety, we have now established a safe spiritual space in which we may become sponsors and resume our own recovery.

Slips that take place after Step Three are discussed with our sponsor. There are no hard and fast rules about the return to sobriety, but typically this is a process of reflection, review, and discussion of bottom or top lines, and agreed-upon action to take. Each sponsor passes on the learning that has been passed on to them. Some assign 30 days of slip questions. Others consider the nature of the slip and assign a varying number of slip questions depending on the context. Some agree on a period of checking in and writing about the slip.

Withdrawal

Between the unhappy, out-of-control circumstances that bring us to S.L.A.A. and the recovery miracles we hear people describe, is a challenging stage called “withdrawal”.

This period can definitely be difficult and painful. Suddenly we are no longer using our old ways of acting out or acting in to get by in life. This can come as quite a shock and in fact many members describe this early period of “withdrawing” from their past lives of sex and love addiction as exactly that, a state of shock.

So what is withdrawal? Withdrawal is what happens when we stop using our old patterns of escape and are suddenly left with ourselves. In other words, we draw back from the old to take on the new and it is this period between the old and the new that we call withdrawal.

Withdrawal can seem very disconcerting. Here we are 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 seems like it might well be worse and might go on forever.

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

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

Common experiences and feelings in withdrawal include: 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 S.L.A.A. HOW approach supports 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 have a safe space to help us move through this withdrawal stage of our recovery.

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

Many of us find these HOW suggestions challenging at first. But we take courage and support from the fact that, time and again, fellow S.L.A.A. members say these tools are what pulled them through the challenging period of withdrawal. Most of us find that the more willingly we adopt the strong support and structure of HOW, the more gracefully we allow our old lives to fall away and our new lives to be rebuilt.

It is through withdrawal that we meet ourselves as we are because it is only behind the fear that we find the seeds of our own personal wholeness.

Here are some other ways that we help ourselves through withdrawal:

- we keep up our outreach calls;
- we keep answering one HOW question a day;
- we keep in touch with our sponsor;
- we attend meetings;
- we go for coffee and fellowship after meetings;
- we pray;
- we take a service position;
- we are kind to ourselves;
- we connect with our body by walking, exercising, practicing yoga, or bathing;
- we meditate;
- we journal and write;
- we use positive affirmations;
- we make a gratitude list each morning or before going to bed;
- we read Steps One, Two, and Three.

Some of us find that the S.L.A.A. pamphlet, *Withdrawal: Gateway to Freedom, Hope, and Joy*, is an invaluable source of suggestions for entering, coping with, and emerging from withdrawal. Others read Chapter Five of the *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'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 need a copy of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, and A.A.'s *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. As with the seven-day identification questions to determine our bottom-line behaviors, we answer a question per day and read it to our sponsor. At the end of the thirty days, we are taken through a Step One to Three ceremony by our sponsor. We are then “stepped up” by our sponsor in a HOW meeting to celebrate the completion of Steps One to Three. Remembering the old-timer saying, “Service is sobering”, after the Step Three Ceremony we start sponsoring fellow members of S.L.A.A. up to Step Three, if we feel ready to do so.

If we are sponsoring someone through Steps One to Three and are unavailable on a particular day, it is our responsibility to let them know that they can share their writing in an outreach call with another experienced fellow member, arrange a different time, an email exchange, or read the answer in a voice message. If, for some reason, we are unavailable for a longer period of time, it is our responsibility to find another temporary sponsor for our sponsee. Sometimes this is our own sponsor.

We also let our sponsee know that if they consistently fall short of agreed commitments without good reason, we may decide to no longer sponsor them. An example might be failing to call us at the agreed time for three consecutive days without adequate explanation.

We encourage our sponsees to share in the prioritised share portion of S.L.A.A. HOW meetings after fourteen days of continuous bottom-line sobriety (or as the meeting allows, as some meetings have different policies). This is to ensure the meeting carries a message of recovery.

If we slip while we are sponsoring, we notify our own sponsor and all our sponsees, giving them the option to continue with us or not. We do not stand up as a sponsor or accept new sponsees until the time agreed upon with our sponsor. All of the above is designed to heal and to support us whilst we regain sobriety.

The First Thirty Questions

In working this guide with our sponsor, we find that no sheet of paper or list of ideas is the be-all and end-all for everyone’s recovery. We designed these questions to guide us through the first three Steps. There are no right or wrong answers. Many who have worked the HOW concept find that it is helpful to keep it in the present by focusing only on the question of the day and the Step being worked on, and by not skipping ahead to the next questions and Steps.

In order to answer these thirty questions, we need the following additional reading material: Bill W's, "This Matter of Honesty" article (see References section):

1. Read, "The Doctor's Opinion" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book (pp. xxv-xxxii in the printed fourth edition). Write a history of your sex and love addiction, beginning with the first time you can remember such things being an issue. In your writing, discuss how many partners you have had (or not had in the case of anorexia), what medical or psychological attention you have sought for the problem, and what attempts you have made at controlling your behavior.
2. Read the section, "Step One" in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, chapter 4. In your written answer, discuss and reflect upon the effect sex and love addiction and anorexia have had on you over the years. Write on whether you truly see yourself as a sex and love addict.
3. Re-read the chapter, "Step One" in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text. In your written answer, discuss and reflect upon the following ideas found in Step One: the progressive nature of our disease and the need for unconditional surrender.
4. In your written answer, discuss and reflect on the fatal nature of our disease as described in the final paragraph of the chapter, "Step One", in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, starting, "Under the lash of alcoholism, we are driven to A.A..." Focus on how the disease has diminished your life.
5. Read Chapter 2, "There is a Solution", in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book. In your written answer, 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*, A.A.'s Big Book. In your written answer, discuss and reflect on this chapter.
7. Read Bill W.'s, "This Matter of Honesty" article. In your written answer, discuss the idea that deception of others is nearly always rooted in deception of ourselves. Write about how this relates to your sexual relationship history and about what you have done in the past, due to sex and love addiction, that reaffirms this idea?
8. Re-read the "Step One" in Chapter 4 of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text. Underline or take note of words and passages that are meaningful to you. In your written answer, discuss why they are important? Also, discuss and reflect on what a complete understanding of Step One can do for you.
9. Read "Step Two" from Chapter 4 in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text. Write on why it is necessary to take Step One before taking Step Two?
10. In your written answer, discuss and reflect upon the effectiveness of the S.L.A.A. program in your personal experience and from what you have observed in others so far. Also discuss whether what you have experienced could have emanated solely from you? If so, why had it not happened before?

11. Read Chapter 4, “We Agnostics”, in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book. Discuss and reflect upon the concepts of honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. How are these tools of growth in the S.L.A.A. HOW approach?
12. In your written answer, discuss and reflect upon the concept of insanity as it applies to you in S.L.A.A.
13. Read the chapter, “Step Two” in *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. In your written answer, consider how you have substituted your addiction for your Higher Power in the past and whether you still do this.
14. In your written answer, 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 the chapter, “Step Two” in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, starting at paragraph 16 (“When we encountered A.A...”) (page 31 in the printed edition).
15. Re-read “Step Two” S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, and the chapter, “Step Two” in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. In your written answer, discuss and reflect upon your childhood exposure to any religious concept. On a two-columned balance sheet, list your feelings as they relate to your early religious experiences. List on one side your negative feelings, and on the other side your positive feelings. Write on what conclusion you reach when you reflect on the balance sheet.
16. Read “Step Three” from Chapter 4 in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'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. Write about the conclusions you reach when you reflect on the balance sheet.
17. Read the chapter, “Step Three” in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (pp. 34-41 in the printed edition). In your written answer, discuss and reflect upon the following quote, “Faith alone can avail us nothing.”
18. Read Chapter 5, “How it Works”, in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book. Write on dependence as you understand it. Answer the question, *How can dependence lead to greater independence?* Refer to paragraph 6 (“Let’s examine for a moment...”) of the chapter, “Step Three” in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (page 36 in the printed edition).
19. Read Chapter 2, “There is a Solution”, in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book . Write on the following questions: *Are you a grateful sex and love addict? If so, why?*
20. Re-read “Step Three” in Chapter 4 of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text. In your written answer, 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*, A.A.'s Big Book (pp. 30-43 in the printed fourth edition). In your writing, discuss and reflect upon the idea that sobriety is the most important thing without exception.

22. In your writing, discuss and reflect on 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*, A.A.’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*, A.A.'s Big Book. S.L.A.A. teaches us a sense of dignity. Write about how you have used your new-found dignity in your relationship with yourself, your family, and your friends?
25. Read Chapter 7, “Working with Others”, in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book . Answer the questions, *What is the importance of giving service in S.L.A.A. ? Why are meetings important? How are they both part of your road to recovery?*
26. Answer the questions, *What is the importance of the telephone in S.L.A.A. ? Why is anonymity important? How are they linked?*
27. In your written answer, discuss and reflect on reading and writing as a tool of the program. Write on why it is essential to your recovery.
28. Read Appendix II, “Spiritual Experience”, in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book. In your answer, discuss and reflect upon the concept that spiritual growth is a daily commitment. How can you grow daily?
29. Re-read “Step Three”, in S.L.A.A.'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. In the morning, re-read “Step One”, in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text. Review your two balance sheets from questions 15 and 16. Write about whether the act of surrender in Step Three brings 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? Are you doing it willingly? After you have written answers to these questions, make a sincere commitment to turn your will and your life over to the care of your Higher Power. Finally, discuss and reflect on your own personal surrender in writing.

Step Three Ceremony

After completing the 7 questions for setting bottom lines and the thirty questions that guide us through the first three Steps, we meet with our sponsor to celebrate the completion of the first Three Steps with an optional ceremony.

The texts that we need to perform the Step Three Ceremony are *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, the A.A. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and *Came To Believe* have been included in the ceremony below.

After completing the ceremony we also celebrate the completion of the first three Steps by stepping up sponsees at a meeting of our choice (see section after the Ceremony).

Step One

SPONSOR

“The disciplines of setting and maintaining bottom-line behavior, phone calls, reporting to sponsors and attending meetings all help us grow. In recovery, action is the magic word. I wish to thank you for asking me to be your sponsor. I have and will continue to need you as much as you need me. Let us join hands and pray.”

SPONSOR AND SPONSEE

“Higher Power, if it be your will, help us to commit ourselves to these Steps in accordance with you will.”

SPONSOR

“There are five candles in front of you. Each candle represents a Step in recovery. The first two represent TRUTH AND REALITY. Without these two qualities, we would not be recovering sex and love addicts.”

Sponsor lights the first candle.

“The candle of truth is the guiding light of all who strive to recover from sex and love addiction. It is a force that brings peace. The sex and love addict must make truth their watchword. They must fearlessly face the truth to avoid the pitfall of self-deception.”

Sponsor lights the second candle.

“This is the candle of reality and it is a new light. It opens the door to a new life. It holds promise of new understanding. It offers a chance for personal renewal. It goes beyond fantasy and holds the dream of a better tomorrow. Without the light of reality we are destined to remain in the sick, shadowy world of past mistakes and unrealistic dreams of false tomorrows.”

Sponsor asks their sponsee the following questions so that they may retake the first Step.

“You have spent a great deal of time getting in touch with your feelings. Can you recall how you felt on the first day of your recovery?”

“Do you want recovery and the S.L.A.A. program to become a way of life? If so, why?”

Sponsor reads page 45, paragraphs 4 and 5 in Came To Believe, starting, “Then as this power began to unfold...”

Then, as this power began to unfold new selves within me, a greater understanding of my fellowmen began. With a new awakening each day—new strengths, new truths, new acceptance of A.A. people and people not in A.A.—a new world opened up. And every day it still does.

The adversities, loneliness, sickness, losses, and disappointments mean nothing now. I'm happy, because I came to believe—not only in God, but in the goodness in everyone.

“What do the words personal powerlessness mean to you?”

“Step One asks that you learn to let go. Do you feel you have learned to let go?”

“What does letting go mean to you?”

“It is said that we have an obsession. Explain what that means to you.”

“Do you recognise the symptoms when your life is unmanageable? What do you do when you feel things are getting unmanageable?”

“What does the word compulsion mean to you? Have you ever felt that you were compelled to do things?”

“Did you feel that obsession and compulsion were part of your life? How? How did you try to control these aspects of your life?”

“How long have you been seeking remedies for your obsession? What did you do when you felt your behavior was getting out of control? What happened to the ideas you tried? What did you do when you noticed you were different? Did you ever realize you had an addiction to sex and love? Did you ever try sheer willpower? Are there other methods you would like to investigate to manage your compulsive behavior? Do you think there is a solution to your problem today?”

“In recovery we seek to practice humility, and let go of ego and pride on a daily basis. Are you willing to do this?”

“Is working the S.L.A.A. program a life or death matter for you?”

“Read page 24 in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, from the last paragraph ‘Under the lash...’”

Sponsee reads:

Under the lash of [addiction], we are driven to [recovery], and there we discover the fatal nature of our situation. Then, and only then, do we become as open-minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be. We stand ready to do anything which will lift the merciless obsession from us.

SPONSOR

“Are you totally powerless over sex and love addiction and anorexia? Have we fully conceded that we were not?”

“Read page 21 (Step One) in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.”

Sponsee reads:

WHO cares to admit complete defeat? Practically no one, of course. Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness. It is truly awful to admit

that, [addiction] in hand, we have warped our minds into such an obsession for destructive [thinking] that only an act of Providence can remove it from us.

No other kind of bankruptcy is like this one. [Addiction], now become the rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self-sufficiency and all will to resist its demands. Once this stark fact is accepted, our bankruptcy as going human concerns is complete.

But upon entering [recovery] we soon take quite another view of this absolute humiliation. We perceive that only through utter defeat are we able to take our first steps toward liberation and strength. Our admissions of personal powerlessness finally turn out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built.

We know that little good can come to any [addict] who joins [recovery] unless they have first accepted their devastating weakness and all its consequences. Until they so humble them self, their sobriety – if any – will be precarious. Of real happiness they will find none at all. Proved beyond doubt by an immense experience, this is one of the facts of [recovery] life. The principle that we shall find no enduring strength until we first admit complete defeat is the main taproot from which our whole Society has sprung and flowered.

SPONSOR

“You've accepted powerlessness. What must you do now?”

Sponsee should realize that recognition of these concepts is not enough. Action and willingness are next. This is the transition to Step Two.

SPONSOR

“You have just taken the First Step. At this point I ask that you light the third candle which is the candle of SURRENDER. As you do so, I will read:

Sponsee lights the third candle.

“In recovery surrender is the first and most important act necessary to launch you into the other Steps. Without the surrender of your sex and love addiction, your ego, and your will, all else is hopeless. When you surrender you let go of negative thoughts, disbelief, and grandiosity and you open yourself up to the process of learning who you are and where you fit into the scheme of things.”

Step Two

Sponsor should ask their sponsee the following questions so that they may retake Step Two.

SPONSOR

Read aloud the introduction to Step Two, page 25 in A.A. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

THE moment they read Step Two, most newcomers are confronted with a dilemma, sometimes a serious one. How often have we heard them cry out, “Look what you people have done to us! You have convinced us that we are alcoholics and that our lives are unmanageable. Having reduced us to a state of absolute helplessness, you now declare that none but a Higher Power can remove our obsession. Some of us won't believe in God, others can't, and still others who do believe that God exists have

no faith whatever He will perform this miracle. Yes, you've got us over the barrel, all right—but where do we go from here?"

"What does this Step mean to you?"

"Do you believe that a Power outside yourself will restore you to sanity and help you?"

"Read page 32-33 in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, 'To clergymen, doctors...'"

Sponsee reads:

To clergymen, doctors, friends, and families, the [addict] who means well and tries hard is a heartbreaking riddle. To most [addicts] they are not. There are too many of us who have been just like them and have found the riddle's answer. This answer has to do with the quality of faith rather than its quantity. This has been our blind spot. We supposed we had humility when really, we hadn't. We supposed we had been serious about religious practices when, upon honest appraisal, we found we had been only superficial. Or, going to the other extreme, we had wallowed in emotionalism and had mistaken it for true religious feeling. In both cases, we had been asking something for nothing. The fact was we really hadn't cleaned house so that the grace of God could enter us and expel the obsession. In no deep or meaningful sense had we ever taken stock of ourselves, made amends to those we had harmed, or freely given to any other human being without any demand for reward. We had not even prayed rightly. We had always said, "Grant me my wishes" instead of "Thy will be done." The love of God and [others] we understood not at all. Therefore, we remained self-deceived, and so incapable of receiving enough grace to restore us to sanity.

SPONSOR

"In the S.L.A.A. fellowship belief in anything outside of ourselves, larger than ourselves is enough to take us to the next Step. The idea is not to take back your old ideas, not to rely on self-will. S.L.A.A. does ask that you have an open mind. How open are you?"

"Have you always been willing to listen? If you are willing now, how did this change?"

Did indifference play an important part in your life? How?"

"What about disappointment? Did this reinforce your compulsiveness?"

"Step Two mentions fear. Can you discuss your fears?"

"Our fears and lack of power are self-centered and selfish in origin. But this selfishness and self-centeredness can be replaced by a partnership with a Higher Power. Faith in your Higher Power replaces fear and allows the power of your Higher Power to flow through you. You can then follow your Higher Power's will and exercise your will by asking, 'Thy will, not mine, be done.' A further explanation of this is on page 44-45 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, 'We Agnostics'. Will you read it please?"

Sponsee reads:

WE AGNOSTICS

If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when [acting out], you have little control over [your behaviour], you are probably [an addict]. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.

To one who feels they are an atheist or agnostic such an experience seems impossible, but to continue as they are means disaster, especially if they are an [addict] of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to an [addictive] death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.

But it isn't so difficult. About half our original fellowship were of exactly that type. At first some of us tried to avoid the issue, hoping against hope we were not true [addicts]. But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life – or else. Perhaps it is going to be that way with you. But cheer up, something like half of us thought we were atheists or agnostics. Our experience shows that you need not be disconcerted.

If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome [addiction], many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could will these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn't there. Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly.

Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power?

SPONSOR

“Defiance often comes between ourselves and a Higher Power. Can you describe any defiance you have in relation to your Higher Power?”

“Most of the time our problems with a Higher Power come from debating the question of whether or not our Higher Power is there to help us. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* discusses this idea. Let me read from pp. 26-27 in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, ‘At this juncture ...’”

Sponsor reads:

At this juncture, their sponsor usually laughs. This, the newcomer thinks, is just about the last straw. This is the beginning of the end. And so it is: the beginning of the end of their old life, and the beginning of their emergence into a new one. Their sponsor probably says, “Take it easy. The hoop you have to jump through is a lot wider than you think. At least I’ve found it so. So did a friend of mine who was a one-time vice-president of the American Atheist Society, but he got through with room to spare.”

“Well,” says the newcomer, “I know you’re telling me the truth. It’s no doubt a fact that [SLAA] is full of people who once believed as I do. But just how, in these circumstances, does a fellow ‘take it easy’? That’s what I want to know.”

“That,” agrees the sponsor, “is a very good question indeed. I think I can tell you exactly how to relax. You won’t have to work at it very hard, either. Listen, if you will, to these three statements. First, [SLAA] does not demand that you believe anything. All of its Twelve Steps are but suggestions. Second, to get sober and to stay sober, you don’t have to swallow all of Step Two right now. Looking back, I find that I took it piecemeal myself.

Third, all you really need is a truly open mind. Just resign from the debating society and quit bothering yourself with such deep questions as whether it was the hen or the egg that came first. Again, I say, all you need is the open mind.”

The sponsor continues, “Take, for example, my own case. I had a scientific schooling. Naturally I respected, venerated, even worshiped science. As a matter of fact, I still do – all except the worship part. Time after time, my instructors held up to me the basic principle of all scientific progress: search and research, again and again, always with the open mind. When I first looked at [SLAA] my reaction was just like yours. This [SLAA] business, I thought, is totally unscientific. This I can’t swallow. I simply won’t consider such nonsense.

“Then I woke up. I had to admit that [SLAA] showed results, prodigious results. I saw that my attitude regarding these had been anything but scientific. It wasn’t [SLAA] that had the closed mind, it was me. The minute I stopped arguing, I could begin to see and feel. Right there, Step Two gently and very gradually began to infiltrate my life. I can’t say upon what occasion or upon what day I came to believe in a Power greater than myself, but I certainly have that belief now. To acquire it, I had only to stop fighting and practice the rest of [SLAA’s] program as enthusiastically as I could.

“This is only one person’s opinion based on his own experience, of course. I must quickly assure you that [SLAA’s] tread innumerable paths in their quest for faith. If you don’t care for the one I’ve suggested, you’ll be sure to discover one that suits if only you look and listen. Many a [person] like you has begun to solve the problem by the method of substitution. You can, if you wish, make [SLAA] itself your ‘higher power.’ Here’s a very large group of people who have solved their [addiction] problem. In this respect they are certainly a power greater than you, who have not even come close to a solution. Surely you can have faith in them. Even this minimum of faith will be enough. You will find many members who have crossed the threshold just this way. All of them will tell you that, once across, their faith broadened and deepened. Relieved of the [addictive] obsession, their lives unaccountably transformed, they came to believe in a Higher Power, and most of them began to talk of God.”

SPONSOR

“Now would you turn to page 12 in *Alcoholics Anonymous, A.A.'s Big Book*? ‘Despite the living...’ Read it and then we’ll discuss it.”

Sponsee reads:

Despite the living example of my friend there remained in me the vestiges of my old prejudice. The word God still aroused a certain antipathy. When the thought was expressed that there might be a God personal to me this feeling was intensified. I didn’t like the idea. I could go for such conceptions as Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind or Spirit of Nature but I resisted the thought of a Czar of the Heavens, however loving [God’s] sway might be. I have since talked with scores of [people] who felt the same way.

My friend suggested what then seemed a novel idea. He said, “Why don’t you choose your own conception of God?” That statement hit me hard. It melted the icy intellectual mountain in whose shadow I had lived and shivered many years. I stood in the sunlight at last.

It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning. I saw that growth could start from that point. Upon a foundation of complete willingness I might build what I saw in my friend. Would I have it? Of course I would!

Thus was I convinced that God is concerned with us humans when we want [God] enough. At long last I saw, I felt, I believed. Scales of pride and prejudice fell from my eyes. A new world came into view.

SPONSOR

“Are you willing to go to any lengths to get rid of your old ideas?”

“Step Two is a rallying point. It puts us on the right path. It shows us the insanity of our addiction. It puts right our relationship with our Higher Power. It shows us where we can end up if we lose our connection with our Higher Power. Discuss your relationship to your Higher Power as it is today. How do you relate to the word insanity? Do you believe your Higher Power can restore you to sanity?”

“You have just taken the first two Steps.”

SPONSOR

Sponsee lights the fourth candle.

“Let us now light the candle of ACCEPTANCE. As you light it, I shall read to you:

“Without acceptance you could not have progressed this far. Acceptance is seeing things as they really are. Acceptance is an understanding that we have spent our lives denouncing everything and now we must open up our hearts as well as our minds and accept. We must accept the will of our Higher Power and accept that only our Higher Power can restore us to sanity.”

Step Three

SPONSOR

“Before we go further I would like to read something from pp. 567-568 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, ‘Spiritual Experience’”

Sponsor reads:

The terms “spiritual experience” and “spiritual awakening” are used many times in this book which, upon careful reading, shows that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from [addiction] has manifested itself among us in many different forms.

Yet it is true that our first printing gave many readers the impression that these personality changes, or religious experiences, must be in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals. Happily for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous.

In the first few chapters a number of sudden revolutionary changes are described. Though it was not our intention to create such an impression, many [addicts] have nevertheless concluded that in order to recover they must acquire an immediate and overwhelming “God-consciousness” followed at once by a vast change in feeling and outlook.

Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of [addicts] such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule. Most of our experiences are what the psychologist William James calls the “educational variety” because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before they are them self. They finally realise that they have undergone a profound alteration in their reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by them self alone. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.

Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it “God-consciousness.”

Most emphatically we wish to say that any [addict] capable of honestly facing their problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided they do not close their mind to all spiritual concepts. They can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial.

*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.***

“Making a decision to turn your will and your life over to your Higher Power is part of the process of Step Three. Your Higher Power is with you now. A spiritual awakening can be compared to planting a seed. Growth does not begin when you can see the flower breaking its way through the earth. It begins at the moment the seed is planted. Your spiritual awakening began at the moment of your surrender in Step One.”

“Read pp. 62-63 in *Alcoholics Anonymous A.A.'s Big Book*, ‘Selfishness, self-centredness...’”
Sponsee reads:

Selfishness – self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt.

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the [addict] is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though we usually don’t think so. Above everything, we [addicts] must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without [God’s] aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God’s help.

SPONSOR

“I'd like to ask you a few questions: *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* says in relation to Step Three that ‘practicing Step Three is like the opening of a door which to all appearances is

still closed and locked.’ Was this your experience? How was your vision of life like a locked door?”

“How shall you keep your Higher Power in your life?”

Sponsor tells the sponsee what they have done to keep their Higher Power ever present.

“Do you feel that you are aware of the dangers of self-sufficiency?”

“Step Three calls for us to make a decision. We must decide to turn our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power. Are you willing to make that decision?”

“We realize that faith does not automatically mean that we have let our Higher Power into our life. But our willingness is already demonstrated in the way we work at casting out our old ideas and turning ourselves over to the S.L.A.A. program to relieve our sex and love obsession.”

“Let us spend some time now praying that our Higher Power will come into our lives and actively guide us. Will you read the prayer on page 63 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, ‘God, I offer myself...’ whilst I bow my head?”

Sponsee reads:

God, I offer myself to You – to build with me and to do with me as You will. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Your will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Your power, Your love, and Your way of life. May I do Your will always!

SPONSOR

“Now I will read it to you while you pray to your Higher Power letting them know of your decision to turn your will and life over to them.”

Sponsor reads.

“You have just made a commitment to your Higher Power.”

“You have asked your Higher Power to relieve you of the bondage of self.”

“We have turned it over, we have made a decision. Sex and love addiction will no longer be the focus of your life. Now we must get out and help others.”

“S.L.A.A. has taught us to live for today and to work at loving our Higher Power, ourselves and others. Our Higher Power loves us enough to remove our obsession. If our Higher Power can love us, can't we love ourselves? If we learn to love ourselves then it will be easier to love and forgive others.”

SPONSOR

“You have just taken the Third Step.”

“Will you please light the fifth candle as I read?”

Sponsee lights the fifth candle.

“This is the candle of KNOWLEDGE and it opens the door wide. We now know that our Higher Power is on our side. We can see and hear our Higher Power’s pronouncements in our lives.

We recognise what we may do and what only our Higher Power can do. We acknowledge the greatest gift our Higher Power has given us is knowing ourselves.”

End of Ceremony.

Stepping Up the Sponsee at a Meeting

After the Step Three Ceremony we also celebrate by being stepped up by our sponsor at an S.L.A.A. HOW meeting. This is an opportunity for the group to join us in celebrating another example of the miracles that abound in S.L.A.A. Our sponsor is asked to introduce the newcomer who has 30 days of continuous back-to-back sobriety, has taken the first Three Steps and is ready to become a sponsor. At this meeting, we share for two minutes each. Stepping up a sponsee at a meeting can also be done when they have completed Steps Five, Twelve and the Maintenance Steps.

Guide to Step Four

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

Once we have completed the first three Steps in the program, it is time to start on Step Four. This can often seem a daunting undertaking and it is one of the Steps in the program where many of us falter, procrastinate, and occasionally slip. Our sponsor's experience, love, support, and encouragement are especially important for this phase of our recovery.

Before embarking on Step Four, some of us find it appropriate to discuss and review boundaries with our sponsor. The HOW approach no longer requires daily phone calls and it may be that these are no longer needed. However, it may be helpful to recovery, and to provide support in the challenge of Step Four, that regular meetings, phone calls to our sponsor, and outreach calls continue. These actions keep us connected and help us avoid slips and relapses.

It can also be appropriate to reconsider our bottom or top lines. The experience of those who worked the program suggests that it is rarely appropriate to remove bottom lines completely at this stage. However, that is not to say it is wrong; every person and situation is different. Discussion with our sponsor and connection with our Higher Power guide the way. More often, it can be appropriate to discuss adding or changing the behaviors in our bottom lines as our addictive patterns change.

It is also now helpful to add more top lines as they are positive, affirming behaviors and actions. We let Higher Power be the guide.

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

- Read the section about Step Four in Chapter Five (How it Works) in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, pp. 63-71, starting, "Next we launched out...";
- Step Four in, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, pp. 42-54;
- Step Four in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, pp. 78-81.

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

We write down the inventory and complete it as suggested in chapter Five of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book. We sometimes use the same or a format similar to the table attached in this section. Our inventory is 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 is a deadline in place, even if that deadline is subsequently moved. Whatever is agreed, our sponsor guides and supports us as we are working through the inventory.

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

Getting Started

We find paper and pen and start writing. *Alcoholics Anonymous, A.A.'s Big Book*, states on eight different occasions that we are to write out a Step Four. It has been our experience that when we stop acting out, the problems that are actually caused by the sex and love addiction begin to dissipate. This often leaves us with the underlying issues or problems that have caused us to act out in the first place. And these are the issues that stay with us, causing pain, unless we do something about them. In the past, they were so painful that we needed something to relieve the pain.

In taking Steps Four through Nine, we aim to get to the causes and conditions of our disease. This process allows us to take the right actions that lead to greater contentment and comfort. We then no longer need to act out to relieve the pain, because the emotional pain itself has lessened.

It has been our experience that it doesn't matter what our intention or attitude is when we take Step Four, or what our ideas are as to what it will do for us and how. What matters is that we take the Step honestly and to the best of our ability. We stop rationalizing that we will complete Step Four better if we do it later — or after being in the program a little longer — or any of the other excuses that all of those who have gone before us have tried!

We try to stop telling ourselves that we need to get in the right mood to take this Step. We are in the right mood to take this Step when we are ready to stop hurting and want to get well. All of our lives, we have tried to think our way into right action. This time, we have to act our way into right thinking.

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

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

We try not to tear up any part of our inventory. If we believe the statement we have made is wrong, we make a note as to why it is wrong. We promise ourselves to be honest and fearless. We try to keep making progress and gradually work through our resentments, fears, and harms.

Some of us get discouraged because we don't believe we have become honest enough, or can't remember everything that has happened to us. We do our best — our honest best. No one is capable of remembering every incident of their lives, so we write down what we can remember. We trust fellow members when they encourage us to complete Step Four because of the rewards that they experienced.

Alcoholics Anonymous, A.A.'s Big Book, states on page 65, "We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty." Many of us find that it helps to carry around a notebook so that we can jot down anything that pops into our heads. We arrange to have a safe place to put our Fourth Step Inventory. We don't leave anything out. In Step Four, we put down all the things that we wince at. We just write them down. They aren't hurting anyone but us.

Alcoholics Anonymous, A.A.'s Big Book, refers to "wreckage of your past" on page 164. From this we are 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 deal with how the past has affected our world within. How our negative thoughts and feelings about ourselves and others have affected us spiritually, mentally, and physically. *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, instructs us to write about our fears, resentments, and harms done — those harms due to our own sexual and damaging behaviors.

Thoroughness is the watchword when taking inventory. When we are truly honest with ourselves and put our deeply buried secrets and what we consider our most shameful thoughts and deeds on paper, we find a liberation we have never felt before. A discovery and relief that creates a connection, as if the words and the strength to release them have been dictated directly by our Higher Power. It is the actual act of writing that gives us clear thinking and an honest appraisal of our life to that point. This is our first tangible evidence of our complete willingness to move forward.

What we are experiencing is not mere relief (we will get that, no doubt), what comes is an exhilarating hope for a new way of being in the world. We give ourselves permission to believe, for the first time ever, that we truly have another chance in life. As we continue to dump accumulated baggage we are carrying around by putting it in writing, we ask for forgiveness in our prayers and meditation. The outcome is a newly discovered, previously unimaginable, joy for living. So, we get out our pen and paper and begin!

The questions that follow are designed to be used as a prompt in case we might forget something. They are merely a mechanism for triggering the relevant information. The information can be relevant to the past or to present feelings. They are not the only questions that may be helpful.

Prompts for Resentments

1. If your parents fought, did you resent it?
2. List all the feelings of resentment you had or still have toward your parents.
3. Do you resent your status in the family? (ie. only child, youngest child, oldest child, twin etc.)
4. Try to remember each successive 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. 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 your parents compare you to other family members or friends? 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 S.L.A.A. 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

1. Do you have, or have you had, unrealistic fears? If so, what are your fears?
2. How do you react to conflict? If your parents fought, did it scare you?
3. 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.
4. Do you fear any particular type of person?
5. What is your greatest fear?

6. Are you afraid of being sexually rejected?
7. Are you afraid of being sexually abused?
8. Are you afraid of being alone? Not in a relationship? Write about these fears.
9. Are you afraid of being left or rejected in a relationship?
10. If you are divorced or getting divorced, write out any fears about the situation and the people involved.
11. Are you afraid of getting too close to another person because you are afraid of being rejected?
12. Are you miserly with money? What are your fears concerning money? Do you spend with no thought of tomorrow?
13. What kind of things do you waste most time worrying about — the future or the past?
14. What are your present fears? List them.
15. Did fear and inferiority about fitness for your job destroy your confidence and fill you with conflict?

Prompts for Own Sexual Conduct

1. In your life have there been any significant or negative consequences from acting out sexually? List any harms done to self or others (for example: unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases).
2. Have sexual relations resulted in harm to yourself or others?
3. 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 jeopardize your standing in the community? Did you insist that you were the pursued and not the pursuer, and thus absolve yourself?
4. 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?
5. If there was rejection or coldness at home, did you use this as a reason for promiscuity?
6. Do you use sex as a punishment or reward? Are you careless of your partner's feelings?
7. Write about all sexual experiences not previously discussed, especially those which made you feel uncomfortable.
8. Do you engage in sex in order to build your own ego by a feeling of conquest?

9. Are you or have you been involved in a love affair that could bring yourself or others harm?
10. Have you deprived yourself and others of touch and sensual experiences through your sexual or social anorexia?
11. Have relationships or marriages come to an early conclusion, or conflict arisen as a result of your inability to participate sexually?
12. Have you pushed people away or deprived yourself in terms of relationships?
13. 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

1. List the first time you ever stole anything. Inventory all your thefts. Don't forget to include employers' time. List the harmonious relationships that you had and that you have destroyed.
2. Were you a troublemaker? If so, in what way? Did you destroy property?
3. What kind of lies did you tell? If people were hurt as a result, list them on your review of harms other than sexual.
4. Were you unreliable as a friend, breaking off relationships without any explanation when something or someone who seemed better came along?
5. Did you set one member of your family against another?
6. If you partnered with a cold, unloving person, ask yourself why you chose them. 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 significant other?
7. Do you make spiritual commitments while lacking sufficient funds to cover the amount promised?
8. 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 in an effort to feel superior ?
9. Do you have a pattern of getting sick? Do you use illness as an excuse to avoid responsibilities or get attention or sympathy or to get out of a jam?
10. 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?
11. Do you pad your expense account or use food allowances to buy things just for yourself?
12. What kind of things do you lie about the most?

13. Do you find yourself punishing your children for the wrong reasons? List the harms you have done to your children.
14. Are you cold and indifferent to your family, friends, work and your own needs?
15. 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?
16. Do you gossip or make up things about other people's behavior?
17. Did you have such unprincipled ambition that you double-crossed and undercut your associates?
18. 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 find that the most common symptoms of emotional insecurity are fear, anxiety, anger, self-pity and depression. These stem from causes which sometimes seem to be within us, and, at other times, come from without. To take inventory in this respect, we have to consider carefully all personal relationships which bring continuous and recurring trouble. We remember that this kind of insecurity may arise in any area where instincts are threatened, needs not met or emotional wounds triggered. Questions asked in our inventory to find answers for this kind of insecurity run like this:

- Looking at both past and present, what sex and love situations have caused us fear, anxiety, bitterness, frustration, anger, or depression?
- Appraising each situation fairly, can we see our own responsibilities and part in things?
- Do these problems arise because of ego, selfishness, dishonesty, or unreasonable demands?
- Or, if our disturbance is seemingly caused by the behavior of others, why do we lack the ability to accept conditions we cannot change?

These are the sort of fundamental inquiries that disclose the source of our discomfort and indicate whether we can change what we can and live serenely with what we cannot.

Suppose that financial insecurity constantly arouses these same feelings. We ask ourselves to what extent have our own mistakes fed our gnawing anxieties. If the actions of others are part of the cause, what can we do about that? If we are unable to change the present state of affairs, will we be willing to take the measures necessary to shape our lives to conditions as they are?

Suggested Structure for a Step Four Inventory

Below is an example of a Step Four Inventory first used in an early version of the S.L.A.A. HOW Sponsorship Guide. It is not the only worksheet used by S.L.A.A. HOW members. Each sponsor has their own approach for a Step Four Inventory and explains their worksheet to us. But all worksheets are similar. As we fill in the columns for each part, we write the appropriate data in the first three columns of the relevant review. For instance, if we have a resentment against our neighbor for playing loud music, we write, "neighbor" in column 1 of Review of Resentments, and, "plays loud music" in column two. In the third column we write down what part of ourselves is affected by our resentment. It is important to recognize that in the first columns we are looking at what we consider are wrongs against us by others, and that in the last columns we focus on our part and become willing to admit our wrongs in action and in thinking and become willing to set these matters straight. In our last column we look at where we have been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking or afraid.

Different sponsors make various suggestions about how and in which order the columns are to be completed.

Tables below are available for download as a Word document from [Step 4 Forms](#)

REVIEW OF RESENTMENTS

I AM RESENTFUL AT	THE CAUSE	AFFECTS MY	WHAT DID I DO?	WHERE HAVE I BEEN
<p>List people, institutions or principles with whom or with which I am angry.</p>	<p>I ask myself why I am angry, what did they do to me to cause the anger?</p>	<p>On my grudge list I set opposite each name any injuries. Was it my self-esteem, my security, my ambitions, my personal or sex relations which had been interfered with?</p>	<p>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?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selfish? • Dishonest? • Self-seeking and frightened? • Inconsiderate? <p>Which of the above character defects caused me to do what I did, or cause me to want to hold on to the old resentment, even though I may have done nothing to cause it?</p>

REVIEW OF FEARS

WHO/WHAT DO I FEAR?	THE CAUSE	AFFECTS MY	WHAT DID I DO?	WHERE HAVE I BEEN
<p>I list people, institutions and principles that I fear.</p>	<p>What are they going to do to me? Am I going to jail? Am I going to lose something with material value? Am I going to lose face? Will it result in divorce? Will it destroy a personal relationship? Might I lose my job, etc?</p>	<p>On my fears list, I set opposite each name the part of self that is affected. Was it my self- esteem, my security, my ambitions, my personal or sexual relations which have been threatened?</p>	<p>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 a chain of events which have led to my being fearful?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selfish? • Dishonest? • Self-seeking and frightened? • Inconsiderate? <p>Which of the above 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?</p>

REVIEW OF SEXUAL CONDUCT

WHOM DID I HURT?	WHAT DID I DO?	AFFECTS MY	WHAT FEELINGS DID I CREATE IN OTHERS?	WHERE HAVE I BEEN
I list people I have hurt through my sexual conduct.	What did I do, or not do, that caused harm to the other person or people involved?	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?	Did I unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness, desire to retaliate? What should I have done instead?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selfish? • Dishonest? • Self-seeking and frightened? • Inconsiderate? <p>Which of the above character defects caused me to do what I do to harm another?</p>

REVIEW OF HARMS OTHER THAN SEXUAL

WHO DID I HURT?	WHAT DID I DO?	AFFECTS MY	WHAT FEELINGS DID I CREATE IN OTHERS?	WHERE HAVE I BEEN:
I list people (partners, friends, family, colleagues) I have hurt through my conduct.	What did I do, or not do, that caused harm to the other person or people involved?	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?	Did I unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? What should I have done instead?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selfish? • Dishonest? • Self-seeking and frightened? • Inconsiderate? Which of the above character defects caused me to do what I did to harm another?

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 out our Step Four Inventory. It is up to us to decide with whom we wish to take this Step. It is common to do it with our sponsor but this is not a requirement. Some of us choose a therapist, a member of the clergy, or a close friend. Our sponsor sometimes helps 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 is respected. We are choosing someone with whom we feel safe to make ourselves vulnerable and to share some of our innermost secrets, perhaps things that we have not felt able to share with anyone else. We are placing great trust and confidence in that person.

If that person is our sponsor, it is crucial that they respect that confidence. Sponsors who hear a Step Five have to ensure that what they hear is kept confidential and not revealed to anyone.

It can take many hours to complete a Step Five so some of us choose to do this in a few sessions. For most of us Step Five is a transformational experience, and one that can often be exhausting and emotionally draining (for both sponsee and sponsor). It can leave us feeling triggered and vulnerable so it is important that we take our needs into account when arranging the Step Five process. Some of us go to a meeting or make outreach calls at the end of each Step Five reading, when it is done in parts, or do a top line for self-care. It is important to complete this Step without undue delay. Our sponsor therefore needs 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 is mainly to listen. They are not a parent, therapist, or confessor. However, at appropriate times, they share 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 helps us reveal things we find embarrassing. However, our sponsor avoids trading war stories or embarking on their own Step Five. This is our inventory and we need to be given the time and space to share it.

Occasionally, during a Step Five, it becomes clear that we have not completed our Step Four inventory thoroughly. If that happens then our sponsor suggests that we go back to Step Four and complete the inventory, specific resentment or the relevant part, before carrying on with Step Five.

Before commencing this Step, we read the following:

- The first four pages of Chapter Six (Into Action) in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book - 4th edition, pp. 72-75, ending, “Have we tried to make mortar without sand?”
- Step Five, in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text
- Step Five, in *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

In all cases, once we have completed reading our inventory out loud, we read page 75 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, Chapter Six (Into Action) starting, “When we decide who is to hear our story...” As recommended, we find somewhere where we can be quiet for an hour and reflect on the Steps we have taken so far. We have just taken a significant Step in our recovery. Our sponsor sometimes can decide it is appropriate to share how they felt after taking the Step and let us know that it affects different people in different ways. They let us know that it can take a few days, or longer, for us to fully process the effects of Step Five.

1. How did it feel to say your inventory out loud?
2. Was there a particular part of your body where this feeling was the strongest?
3. When you noted the character defects (or character defenses) as part of your Step 4, were there particular items that recurred more than others? The most frequently used words might aid your work in Step 6 and 7.
4. Is there anything that you were too ashamed to share? If yes, how could holding something back eventually result in leading back into your addiction?

Guide to Steps Six to Twelve

These questions are designed to assist those of us working the program from Steps Six to Twelve. Many of us find that it is essential to continue using our tools of reading and writing, attending meetings, and outreach calls, in order to maintain our progress in the program.

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

Before answering each set of questions, we are advised by our sponsor to read the appropriate Step chapter in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text.

After completing Step Six and Seven we meet with our sponsor to share out loud our answers to the questions.

We also meet after Step Eight. In this meeting we agree on the list of amends. We meet again after Step Nine.

Finally, we meet 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* (see References section).

1. Read pp. 75-76, Chapter Six (Into Action) in, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, starting, "When we decide who is to hear our story..." and ending, "...we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol". 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*, Step Six, first paragraph of page 66 and all of page 67, starting, "Some who feel they have done well..." and ending, "...at least until they cause us excessive misery". 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*, starting, "So Step Six...") 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*, Step Four, starting, "To avoid falling into confusion..."). 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 what 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, As Bill Sees It* (see References section).

1. Read *As Bill Sees It* numbers 22, 61, 75. How has working the Twelve Steps helped you work through fear?
2. Do you truly understand humility? Read Step Seven in, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on how humility has affected your life.
3. Read from, *As Bill Sees It*, number 139 "Basis of all Humility", and number 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 numbers 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? Are you still rebellious?
8. How can humility give you 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-centered fear play a part?
12. What proof have you had that other problems besides the deadly obsession (Step Seven, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, pp. 70-76) 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* (see References section).

1. Read, "No Man is an Island", number 118 in *Came To Believe*. Why is it necessary for you to 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 behavior — 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, A.A. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* page 82, last paragraph) 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 have taken the first Eight Steps, we are ready to embark on building better relationships with others by taking responsibility for our behavior in Step Nine. We read this guide before starting the questions for Step Nine. We find it to be a useful resource in assisting us to identify what is a harm, what constitutes an amend (or not), and how the amend can be made. We take these suggestions from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and the experience of other seasoned members who have worked the H.O.W approach and have shared S.L.A.A.'s experience, strength, and hope. We find we can work Steps Eight and Nine best as a joint effort with our sponsor.

Sometimes our sponsor requires us to check in with them before and after each amends. This check-in is sometimes used to review the purpose of our amends and the agreed approach — what will be said and what not. It is also sometimes helpful to discuss how to word things. Or it can 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 finds it appropriate to ensure we check back in to review the process and to share the blessings and relief that come from an amends well made.

The Nature of Harms

We find that harms occur when we inflict physical and emotional suffering, cause a loss of money or time to others, or damage property. In addition, interfering with another's spiritual growth and path by engaging in rescuing behavior such as preventing a crisis, doing something someone should do for themselves and stopping someone from taking the consequences of their actions can 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. This concept is taken from the *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, page 80, "Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people we secure their consent. If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink." For example:

- 1) If a person is not aware that we have harmed them, then we do not make an amends because drawing the matter to their attention might be a harm in itself.
- 2) Other examples include 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 have defined a harm, we place the harm into sections for each person and form 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 review the list of people with our sponsor with a view to identifying who suffered and what actions need to be taken. In reviewing the list, the nature of the proposed amends and form of the amends is defined.

Types of Amends

Direct Amends

Direct amends are those that can be made if the person consents to be contacted and direct contact with them will not cause further harm.

Living amends

Living amends can be made to those people that are in our lives so that, from the point of the amends on, we change how we relate to them. Where a person cannot be contacted, the living amends consists in a change to our behavior from that time forward towards ourselves and towards the person we have harmed. Sometimes a direct amends is appropriate first, followed by the continuous behavior of a living amends.

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

Indirect amends

Indirect amends are those that we make to people we have harmed but that we cannot make direct amends to because that person is dead, unable to be reached, their identity is not known or remembered, or the nature of the suffering makes it inappropriate. In such cases an appropriate amends becomes a donation to a charity, writing a letter (but not sending it), or changing behavior towards ourselves and others as a way to deal with the amends in question.

Making Amends

Our sponsor provides support during the amends process. Some of us discuss timelines to help combat complacency. Some of us make 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 are willing to meet us.

When it actually comes time to make the amends, it may feel deeply uncomfortable – like how do you actually go about making contact with the people that you want to make amends with? There are at least two options:

- A. If the person knows that you are in recovery, something like this may be appropriate:

As part of my recovery I want to make amends to you. Would you be willing to hear from me on this?

- B. If you don't intend to share your 12-Step Recovery, something like this may be appropriate:

I've been thinking about our time together. You didn't get the best of me and I didn't treat you as you deserved to be treated.

Would you be willing to have a conversation with me so I can share about this, listen to your perspective, and see what I can do to make it right?

The process of making amends has 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 if there is anything the harmed person would like to say, and if there is anything else that we did not mention that still affects them
- 5) Asking how we can make it right.

Step Nine Questions

Before embarking on the Step questions, we read Step Nine in Chapter 5 (How It Works) *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, Step 9 in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text and in the A.A. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

Additional Reading: *As Bill Sees It* (see References section).

1. Read in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'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*, numbers 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*, numbers 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 “Bill’s Story” in *Alcoholics Anonymous, A.A.'s Big Book*, starting, “My schoolmate visited me...” 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, A.A.'s Big Book*, starting, “Now we need more action...”. 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 half way 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 *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*?
11. Write on the amends you have to make that scares you the most 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, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text*, states (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 asks us to do a five to ten minute review and inventory of the day, at the end of each day. We begin each daily inventory with remembering and realizing that a loving God is present with us. We then ask God to show the truth. It is important we do not beat ourselves up for what we find. We review the day against the following questions which are set out in pp. 86-88 of the *Alcoholics Anonymous, A.A.'s Big Book*, starting, “When we retire at night...”. We regularly open this book and re-read these pages as part of our Step Ten process.

- Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest, or afraid? If so, we consider the right action for the next day, in consultation with others, if needed.
- Do we owe an apology? If applicable, we make an apology or amends the next day.
- Have we kept something to ourselves which should have been discussed with another person at once? If so, we take 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 are careful not to drift into worry, remorse, or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others.
- We ask God's forgiveness (and trust that it will be totally given).
- We inquire (of God) what corrective measures should be taken. We keep it simple. If we are new to this or unsure, we check them out with someone with more experience in the program.

Once the review is complete and actions noted (where needed) we leave the review with our Higher Power. We take the action on the next morning and cease worrying about the day passed, as the work of reviewing and corrective action has been completed.

Further reading on pp. 86-87 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, starting, "On awakening...", directs us, at the beginning of the day, in the following way:

- We ask God to direct our thinking.
- We ask God especially that our thinking be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.
- We consider our plans for the day. If we have none, we ask God to show us how to be useful and draw up plans.
- We consider how the corrective measures from the night before can be applied.
- We ask that God show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness, and love.
- We ask God to show us how we can help anyone who is suffering from sex and love addiction.
- If we face indecision: we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought, or decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle.
- We pray some set prayers that emphasize the principles of S.L.A.A.
- We read some spiritual literature and ask God to show us how we can apply it to our day.
- Finally, we pray that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We ask for ourselves, however, if others can be helped.

If agitated or doubtful:

- We ask God for the right thought or action.
- We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show.
- We say to ourselves many times each day, "Thy will be done."

Step Ten Questions

Additional reading required: *As Bill Sees It* (see References section).

1. Re-read page 91 in *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, starting, "In all these situations..." Write on the concept of progress rather than perfection as it applies to your life today.
2. Have you begun to practice respect and courtesy to those you dislike? Write about how you can start practicing these principles.
3. Read number 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*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, and note down any passages that particularly resonate. Discuss and reflect on these passages.
5. Read Step Ten in *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, pp. 88-95. 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 S.L.A.A. meetings..." on page 98, Step Ten, of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text to the end of the paragraph. Discuss and reflect on the importance of getting current.
7. Read pages 90-92 in *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, starting, "Before we ask what a spot-check inventory is..." to, "...is far more His success than ours.". 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 *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, starting, "Finally, we begin to see...". 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 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, starting, "This thought brings us..." 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, Step Ten, of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'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*, numbers 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, *A.A. 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, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 93, starting, “When evening comes...”), "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, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 90, starting, “It is a spiritual axiom...”), "every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us", relate to you?
17. Step Ten, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 90, starting, “It is a spiritual axiom...”, talks of dangerous exceptions for our recovery. What are your dangerous exceptions?
18. How are you developing tolerance?
19. Step Ten, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, in the penultimate paragraph, says to "spot, admit, and correct these 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* (see References section).

1. Read Step Eleven in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text. Discuss and reflect on the idea, page 99, of having "a conscious adult partnership."
2. Read from, *As Bill Sees It* numbers 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. 85-88 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, starting, "Step Eleven suggests...". How has prayer and meditation helped you to be free of self-will run riot?
4. Read, "As Bill Sees It" numbers 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*, A.A.'s Big Book, starting, "Our book is meant to be suggestive only...". 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* numbers 270 and 172. How do you apply the principle that your recovery depends upon God?
7. Read numbers 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 number 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* (see References section).

1. Read Step Twelve in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'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*, A.A.'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 numbers 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. 417-420 in, "Acceptance Was the Answer", in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book starting, "And acceptance is the answer...". Discuss and reflect on how, (page 417) "acceptance is the answer to all of our problems."
5. Read the second to last paragraph (page 103) in Step Twelve from, *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text. How have your views of intimacy and sexuality changed through working the Steps?
6. Read, *As Bill Sees It*, numbers 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*, numbers 46,47 and 48, "The Belief will Come" and in, *As Bill Sees It*, number 331. Discuss what needs to be done to be most effective in helping those who still suffer.

The Maintenance Questions

These questions are optional. They are designed to support and strengthen our recovery once we have completed the Steps. These questions also help us maintain the practices of reflection, reading, writing, attending meetings and outreach that we developed when we first worked the Steps. They are a way to continue the practice of sharing with fellow members that we developed during the Steps.

Those of us wishing to continue to use a structured approach to maintaining our sobriety work the Maintenance Questions ideally in conjunction with a sponsor who has completed the Maintenance Questions themselves. We only answer these questions upon completion of Steps One through Twelve.

How we use the questions and how we share our responses is a matter to be agreed on with our sponsor. Bottom, middle and top lines may be reconsidered and reviewed. The questions relate to and cover the Twelve Steps.

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

Additional reading required: *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, 3rd Edition - (see References section).

1. Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Re-read Step One in, *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, and the *A.A. 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*, S.L.A.A.'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, "There is a Solution", in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book. Write on your feelings regarding the statements made in the italicized paragraph on page 24, starting, "The fact is that most alcoholics...".
4. Read page 43 in, "More About Alcoholism", in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book (last paragraph). Discuss the idea that, "at certain times the sex and love addict has no effective mental defense against the first act out."
5. Read Chapter 6, "Into Action", in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'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, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on the idea that this is the rallying point to sanity.

8. Read Chapter 1, “Bill's Story”, in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'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 the story in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, “The Keys of The Kingdom.” Take an inventory of where you are in relation to 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*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, and in the *A.A. 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*, A.A.'s Big Book. Discuss and reflect on the idea (page 55 starting, “We finally saw that faith...”) that the “Great Reality” is deep down within us.
13. Read Appendix II, “Spiritual Experience” in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'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*, A.A.'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 *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Take a spot inventory that can update your inventory from 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, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 41 (last paragraph). 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*, A.A.'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 Chapter 5, “How it Works”, in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, the last paragraph on page 68, starting, “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*, A.A.'s Big Book, (3rd Edition) “Stars Don't Fall”, pp. 400-417 (see References section). Discuss and reflect on, “now came the black and endless dismal night...” as it was in your life.
22. Read Step Five, *A.A. 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*, A.A.'s Big Book. Discuss and reflect on what you have learned about fearlessness, humility, and honesty. How do you utilize 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*, A.A.'s Big Book, (3rd edition), pp. 464-473 (see References section). Discuss how your disease has made you vulnerable to acting emotionally and compulsively.
26. Read Step Six in the *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text and the A.A. *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*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, and the A.A. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on the idea set out in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, Chapter 5 “How it Works”, that, “half measures availed us nothing.” How are these components of your life — the emotional, physical and spiritual — coming together today?
28. Read in Chapter 6 “Into Action” in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, page 75, 3rd paragraph, starting, “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 the story in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, “Physician, Heal Thyself!” How is the S.L.A.A. 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*, page 7. 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*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, and the A.A. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on how taking this Step indicates a change of attitude for you.
32. Read Chapter 11, “A Vision For You”, in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'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, A.A. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 75, the phrase 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 the story in Chapter 17 *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, pp. 407-420, “And Acceptance Was The Answer”. Discuss and reflect on the idea that, “If I focus on the answer, the answer increases.” (page 417, starting, “I can do the same thing...”).
36. Discuss and reflect on your ability to apologize. 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, *A.A. 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 story, “From Farm to City” in, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, (3rd edition), pp. 261-274 (see References section). Looking at the section from the quote (page 269), “But I have laughed...”, discuss and reflect on your need to make amends. Are you willing to do so?
39. Make a list of those persons you have harmed. 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 *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 7. 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 *A.A. 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 Chapter 6, “Into Action” in, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, starting, “Now we need more action...” to, “...materialize if we work for them.” Write on, “The spiritual life is not a theory, we have to live it,” 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 any rejected amends.
45. Read page 87 in Step Nine, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (last paragraph). 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*, S.L.A.A.’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. Consider how 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*, S.L.A.A.’s Basic Text. Discuss and reflect on the idea that if we don’t learn from our past we are in danger of repeating it.

51. Read page 105, the last page in Step Eleven in, *A.A. 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, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect on how working Step Eleven is the only way to conquer fear.
53. Read in Chapter 11, “Into Action” in, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, pp. 85-88, from the bottom of page 85, starting, “Step Eleven suggests...” to the end. Discuss and reflect on how this segment contains instructions on learning how to let go.
54. Read Step Eleven, in, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, pp. 99-101. Discuss and reflect on how practicing self-forgetting is the result of not trying so hard. Be specific.
55. Read Chapter Eleven, “A Vision for You”, in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book. Discuss and reflect on the idea that willpower alone cannot stop the 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 *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Discuss and reflect upon the actions you have taken to carry the message.
58. Read Chapter 7, “Working With Others”, in, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book. Discuss and reflect on how you can channel your Higher Power to lift you out of bondage and help others.
59. Read, “Doctor Bob’s Nightmare” in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book. Focus on pages 180-181, “I spend a great deal... against a possible slip.” How is service to others an insurance policy in your life?
60. Read the story in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'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.”

Further Thoughts on Sobriety — The Slip Questions

- 001 Using a dictionary (but not AI or Google), 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, and recover. The point of this exercise is to read the definitions and think and reflect about them.
- 002 Why is it important that I think of myself first?
- 003 Write about the Serenity Prayer. What does it mean to you and how can it help you in your life?
- 004 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.*
- 005 Write on the concept of *Just for Today*.
- 006 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?
- 007 List the things you want out of life. How many of these things are really important? Why?
- 008 What about your life would you like to change? How would you change it?
- 009 Make a list of your blessings.
- 010 What would you lose by giving up the S.L.A.A. fellowship?
- 011 What do you fear? How many of these things are beyond your control?
- 012 Because you have been unsuccessful, you are not a failure. Write about this.
- 013 Discuss and reflect on the meaning of love.
- 014 Reverse a negative thought and write on it.
- 015 Discuss and reflect upon the importance of growing up.
- 016 By acting out to punish another, how am I only hurting myself?
- 017 Why don't I want to get well?
- 018 Read pp. 102-104, Step Eleven, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, starting, "Now, what of prayer?..." to, "...difficult circumstances.". Discuss and reflect upon the need for meditation.
- 019 Has the striving or drive for perfection been a realistic goal in my life? How has this helped or hindered me?

- 020 Discuss the dangers of your obsession as you see them — mental, physical, and spiritual.
- 021 Can I afford to have my pre-program insanity back?
- 022 In what ways do I look for joy in my life?
- 023 Do I really listen when people talk to me? In what ways?
- 024 H.A.L.T.S. stands for hungry, angry, lonely, tired and stressed. Why is it important to call a halt when we are hungry, angry, lonely, tired, or stressed?
- 025 Discuss and reflect upon the need for self-worth. List your good points.
- 026 What were my expectations yesterday? Am I being realistic about them today?
- 027 How do others in the S.L.A.A. fellowship act as your mirror?
- 028 Choose a person to whom you should make amends. How did this amends make you feel?
- 029 Open *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, at random. What does it say? How does it relate to your life today?
- 030 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.
- 031 We can't love others until we love ourselves. How does this relate to our feelings today? Yesterday?
- 032 Boredom is a bar against learning. Discuss and reflect upon the idea that boredom is part of our disease.
- 033 What does self-awareness bring? Why would you want to remain unaware?
- 034 How has depriving yourself played a part in your addiction?
- 035 Action is called a magic word. Why is this word important to you today?
- 036 Discuss and reflect upon the idea that we must keep things simple.
- 037 How many people do you fail when you fail yourself?
- 038 By keeping busy how do you avoid yourself? When did you last do this?
- 039 Read Step Six in, *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 68 particularly starting, "Many will at once ask..." How does the whole Step make you feel?
- 040 Write on what the advantages are when you have Bottom-Line sobriety.
- 041 Write on procrastination and the self sabotage behaviors that may result from procrastination. Give some examples.
- 042 Re-Read Step Three in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, or in *A.A. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and write on your feelings.

- 043 What was your spiritual rock-bottom?
- 044 What was your physical rock-bottom?
- 045 What, in your opinion, is your Higher Power's concept of you?
- 046 What does sex and love mean to you today? How does it affect you now?
- 047 How are compulsivity and your sex and love addiction connected?
- 048 Write about giving in and why you do.
- 049 Write about how fear-based thinking has played a part in your acting in or out. Give some examples.
- 050 Write on your concept of a Higher Power.
- 051 Write on what the S.L.A.A. Fellowship means to you.
- 052 With whom are you sharing the load of your recovery?
- 053 When and how did you allow self-pity to rule your life?
- 054 How have you allowed false pride to defeat you?
- 055 Do you allow yourself to be vulnerable? Why or why not? Can you give some examples?
- 056 Read Step Seven in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Write about humility.
- 057 Write on how defiance was a strong part of your life. Have you changed?
- 058 Have you allowed arrogance to play a large part in your life?
- 059 How is your need for control getting in the way of your recovery?
- 060 What changes did you see in yourself before you slipped?
- 061 Read page 268 from, "With trepidation," to page 269, "so I stayed in S.L.A.A." in the story "The Language of the Emotionally Damaged", and then page 121, first page in Chapter 7, "Starting an S.L.A.A. Group", *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text. Do meetings play an important part in your life?
- 062 Read Step Four in *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text. Have you allowed resentment to take over?
- 063 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?
- 064 Make an inventory of the good things in your life.
- 065 What are the good things that you would like sobriety to bring? How well are you handling your problems today?
- 066 Are you trying too hard to work the program perfectly?

- 067 Read Chapter 2, “There is a Solution” of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book. What does being well look like to you?
- 068 Write on how you have used sex and relationships to face life.
- 069 Write on following God’s will.
- 070 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.
- 071 What are your feelings today concerning God, sex, and love?
- 072 What is your concept of happiness?
- 073 Discuss and reflect on the idea that making mistakes is part of life.
- 074 What will your life be like in 10 years' time if you don’t work the S.L.A.A. program of recovery?
- 075 Discuss and reflect on when you think you will have achieved success.
- 076 Discuss and reflect on the idea that everyone has faults.
- 077 Are you afraid of a healthier sex and love life? Discuss and reflect.
- 078 How do you feel if you do something you know to be wrong? Discuss and reflect.
- 079 Are patience and wisdom connected? Discuss and reflect.
- 080 *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, S.L.A.A.'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.
- 081 Are you the master of your emotions? Discuss and reflect.
- 082 Discuss and reflect on how you would like things to be vs how things are.
- 083 *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, uses the word “we” 1,102 times in the first 154 pages. Why is it important we see S.L.A.A. as a “we program”? And what does the word “we” mean to you in this context?
- 084 Putting things off can actually make them harder to do. Discuss and reflect on this idea.
- 085 Discuss and reflect on how increased honesty has changed you as a person.
- 086 In the last 30 days what have you learned about yourself in the context of your S.L.A.A. recovery?
- 087 If a thing is worth doing it’s worth doing well. Discuss and reflect on this common saying.
- 088 Love and friendship are what bind the fellowship together. Discuss and reflect.
- 089 In recovery, moderation is a way of life. Discuss and reflect.

- 090 Anger combined with pride can cause us real difficulties. Discuss and reflect on this idea.
- 091 Discuss and reflect on what actions you should take when you are wrong and what actions you should take when you are right.
- 092 Sometimes it seems to be the little things that cause us the biggest problems and challenges. Discuss and reflect on this idea.
- 093 Have you harmed yourself through your using? Discuss and reflect.
- 094 Can anger be used for good? Discuss and reflect.
- 095 What one thing would you change in the days preceding your slip?
- 096 Self-pity is harmful. Discuss and reflect.
- 097 Why are you so afraid of yourself? Discuss and reflect.
- 098 Tolerance and intolerance — what do these two words evoke for you?
- 099 Have I truly surrendered to the program?
- 100 How have slip questions helped support me in regaining my sobriety?

Common Questions About 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 S.L.A.A. HOW.

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, or, 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 themselves and God, and 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, the sponsor might ask if the sponsee feels they have had this vital spiritual experience and that the promises of S.L.A.A. recovery are coming true in their lives, or 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 S.L.A.A. HOW concept can't attend or share at a non-HOW meeting, or non-HOW members can't share at an S.L.A.A. 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 H.O.W approach, the sponsee is encouraged to begin this practice as soon as they commence the first "30 Questions."

7. **Myth:** A sponsee can't reach out to an old sponsor for a set period of time.

This is not true.

8. **Myth:** A sponsee must complete these Steps as set out in this document before working the Steps in Anorexia.

This is not true. Should the sponsee identify strongly as anorexic, it is possible that it may be more useful to work the Anorexia Steps first. The sponsee should discuss this with their sponsor.

Acknowledgements

This Guide acknowledges the contribution made by the writing of fellow members of S.L.A.A. who produced draft HOW literature over the years. Most of that writing has been incorporated into this document, including the non-copyright documents listed below.

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