

## THE 12 STEPS OF SEX ADDICTS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

## THE 12 TRADITIONS OF SAA

1. Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends upon SAA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for S.A.A membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SAA as a whole
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An SAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sex Addicts Anonymous should remain forever non professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SAA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sex Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SAA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion: we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

## ABOUT THIS PAMPHLET

This pamphlet has been approved by the International Service Organization of SAA Inc. It is based on literature published and used by the Southern California Intergroup of Sex Addicts Anonymous. Additional ideas were contributed by the Twin Cities Intergroup of Sex Addicts Anonymous. We are grateful for this gift of their experience.

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## Tri County Recovery

### The Bubble A Metaphor for Addictive Sexual Behavior

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## SAA

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# The Bubble

IMAGINE A LITTLE CHILD dipping a plastic paddle into a solution and blowing bubbles. The child keeps doing it over and over, and eventually blows so long and hard that a giant bubble emerges and engulfs the child. This is a powerful image for expressing what happens to us as a sex addict.

Being hit with the obsession to act out is like being engulfed in the bubble. We are powerless and carried away by the all-encompassing power of our compulsions. In the grip of our addiction, we see the outside world through a transparent wall, but we can't communicate with it realistically because the wall cuts us off.

The bubble was blown during those times when our minds were preoccupied with addictive thoughts and fantasies, it became full blown when we progressed to acting out our sexual rituals, and it burst only when the rituals ended in some kind of climax.

The exhibitionist who spent hours driving around in a car looking for victims is totally caught up in the bubble. The voyeur who waited outside a window hoping for a magical glimpse of a naked body, the addict who met someone and ended up quickly in bed with them, the addict who cruises the streets for prostitutes, or who hurried to an arcade to hide in a little booth and spend quarters to gaze at pornographic movies—all these addicts were helplessly in the grip of the bubble.

The bubble is an appropriate, poetic image for many reasons. It expresses the radical nature of the addict's isolation. When we were in the bubble acting out, we existed in a secret world of our own creation where we sought thrills and pleasure. Unfortunately, this was also a world of shame and guilt though these

feelings did not hit us until the bubble burst and we reentered the real world. Addicted, we then prepared to create the bubble once again in order not to have to live with feelings of shame and thus we were isolated prisoners within the addictive cycle.

The bubble is also an appropriate image to express the sense of liberation we usually felt while acting out, as though we floated above all the burdensome responsibilities of normal life. Life seemed as simple, symmetrical and unified as a bubble because all the great and overwhelming realities of life were reduced to a single purpose. There was only one meaning in our lives during those hours spent in the bubble—all thoughts and feelings were expressed only in relation to that one purpose. Life was immensely simplified in the bubble.

Life was also "safe" in the bubble, as though it were a womb. Ironically, the wall of the bubble surrounding us actually seemed protective even when it carried us into great danger, because we believed that as long as we stayed in our own isolated world nothing could really touch us. This is not to say that in the bubble we never experienced fear, on the contrary, fear of police, fear of discovery by a spouse, fear of disease—all these fears were felt in the bubble.

The addict, however, found a way to turn these fears into sources of stimulation that became part of the very "fix" that was sought. In the meantime, the real fears of life which we did not face—losing a job, financial insecurities, death of a loved one, rejection by someone significant in our life—seemed far, far away, outside the bubble's wall. That is why, in an ironic way, we felt "safe" in the bubble, and further illustrates how the complexities of life became reduced in the bubble to single-minded simplicity. We never had to deal with the real, complex fears of life, instead, all feelings were expressed

only in relation to sex. This simplicity and safety enabled us to feel in control when we were in the bubble; "I know how to hide from the police, and therefore my fear only pumps up my adrenaline, making me feel all the more in control and powerful." To deal with life's problems we often resorted to acting out in order to feel that reassuring simplicity, safety, and control that being in the bubble supplied.

The bubble is also an appropriate image for acting out because it expresses the irony that in this "liberation from the realities of life, we were actually trapped. We may have felt as if we were flying to Mars, but actually we were trapped, engulfed in a bubble that felt like total freedom to go anywhere and do anything. The problem, however, is that the simplistic single-minded obsessiveness which the bubble represents became more and more a restrictive space. Finally, we discovered that we no longer used the bubble—the bubble used us. Our freedom had become utter slavery.

Being compelled to enter the bubble is an expression of our powerlessness. When it burst, as it inevitably did, we felt the unmanageability as we crashed to the ground. The unmanageability was profound because our escapes into the bubble had prevented us from facing reality and learning the lessons necessary to effectively cope with life.