

SCA DC NEWSLETTER

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By SCA Metro DC Intergroup

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My Story

By R. F.

My name is R.F. and I'm a sex addict. I first said those words in April of 1995 at a Monday night meeting at the Dupont Circle Club. I was afraid to admit to this yet relieved at the same time. I finally found a place where I could talk about my addiction among others who experientially understood it. How did I eventually find myself at an SCA meeting?

From my earliest memories, I feared being judged and out of favor with my parents and friends. I always wanted to fit in but never felt I could ever achieve that. And it became even more complicated when I realized that I was attracted to boys and men rather than to those of the opposite sex. I had a secret that I didn't dare tell others, lest I be totally ostracized.

In high school I tried to eradicate these feelings by immersing myself in an evangelical group. I became "born again" and through high school and college, continually pleaded with God to release me from my feelings of lust and desire for other men. It was still a secret – it was just between me and God. But I experienced no relief. In fact, I added to my list of secrets when, in my senior year in college, I had my first acting out experience in a public bathroom on campus. It was both exhilarating and shameful at the same time. And I immediately became addicted to anonymous sex... hook, line and sinker.

I continued to return to acting out places on campus over the next two years, each time telling myself that it was going to be my last. My guilt and shame grew, yet, amazingly, my "success" in my evangelical group continued to increase. That led me to an offer to live in Spain for three years as a missionary. I truly thought this was the answer to my problem – physically removing myself from my known acting out places. I arrived in Spain, barely knowing the language and the culture. But within 6 months, I found similar acting out places there and picked up where I left off in the US, much to my dismay.

The cost of living a double life had an emotional toll on me. Yet it still did not outwardly affect my evangelical ministry. At the end of the three years in Spain, I was offered a position with this group to lead a ministry at the University of Connecticut starting in the Fall. Before I was to start, I visited my brother in California, which included a visit to San Francisco. It was there where my acting out finally made me realize that I could not live this double life any more. I decided to leave the ministry and to follow my sexual desires, wherever

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Will you still love me...

If I tell you the truth?

Fear of rejection and abandonment by those we want desperately to love us haunts the sexual compulsive/addict. We tend to think that we are unlovable when the truth of our acting out patterns/history is known. Once we begin to work a program of recovery, though, especially at steps 4-8, we realize that only a program based on total honesty can succeed. We learn that we must approach these steps fearlessly and selflessly. We learn to drop our feeble and manipulative attempts to curry undeserved favor and love, and replace such behavior with acts of courage and candor.

However, despite our best efforts to turn our will and lives over to our Higher Power, we cannot help fearing that the practice of rigorous honesty will bring isolation and loneliness.. We fear not only losing relationships we already have, but hold little hope that we will ever be loved by anyone who knows "the shameful truth." Are these fears unfounded? Not entirely, perhaps, but obsessing on this question is putting the cart a bit before the horse. Grappling with this question requires focusing on the primary purpose of honesty in recovery. So, this topic becomes more about our expanded ability to love and respect others rather than playing to the fear of not being loved and obsessed with what we can get from others.

In the book, False Intimacy, by Dr. Harry Schaumberg, the author speaks in one chapter of the role our fear plays in the continuing destruction of self and home... "Like many spouses in your situation,

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NEWS

One tool that can help one's recovery is to participate in **DC SCA's Blog site**. Members have found this site as a way to remain connected while at work and between meetings. If you are interested in becoming a member of the blog site, email dscablog@verizon.net.

We had a fun time at our last social event in March. Socializing is one of the tools of our program and helps to break out of the isolation that is so strongly a part of the disease. Our next **SCA Social Event** will be in June. You should hear more about this at an SCA meeting soon. Please call R. M. at [REDACTED] if you have any questions.

Please contact your editor, R. F. at [REDACTED] if you would like to share your story or contribute in other ways to the DC SCA newsletter.

My Story continued

they would take me.

Two weeks later I met my partner of the next 14 years in a public bathroom. I soon came out as a gay man, joined the local gay men's chorus and thought my problems were resolved.

They weren't. Within 6 months I was acting out outside of my relationship and began to create another double life and another life of secrets. But now, with the freedom of being "out", I also had more opportunities for my addiction to flourish. Over time my visits to public bathrooms and parks increased, at times going back to the same place up to 6 times in a given day. On work trips I would visit gay bars and bathhouses and get as much sex as I could without jeopardizing my work responsibilities.

It's amazing how I was able to change my circumstances, but my core issues remained the same. I was still living a double life, I still had my secrets and I was still addicted to sex.

This culminated in becoming involved in an affair that, in spite of its sordid origins, gave me a glimpse of what a relationship could be like based on love, trust and honesty. I wanted that more than anything else. I decided to change my circumstances again – get out of my old relationship, start a new one – but with one major difference – I became rigorously honest. No more secrets, no more double life. The person I became rigorously honest with was in AA so he knew about addition and accepted me for who I was.

I soon realized that I needed my own support network and finally arrived in SCA. There I learned about developing my own sexual recovery plan, finding a sponsor, working the Steps and doing service. I learned about how to be rigorously honest with myself and others and how to turn my will and my life over to my Higher Power. I began to practice willingness and acceptance and finally experienced the ability to CHOOSE, on a daily basis, either my addition or my recovery. I began to choose recovery and for the first time in my life, I now know what it means to be free from my sexual compulsivity, one day at a time. It is a miracle and I am grateful to this program for offering me this gift.

Will You Still Love Me continued

you may fear that if you begin to address this problem your marriage will fall apart and you'll be abandoned and rejected by your spouse and other people. You may feel deep shame and guilt. However, the sexual addiction is what is destroying you spiritually and emotionally, negatively impacting your marriage and family, and perhaps creating much more damage than you realize." So, first, we must rise above our selfish concern and realize that for the sake of those we now love, we must frankly and honestly address our behavior, and fearlessly attack recovery without expectations of how others will react.

In the book, Lonely all the Time, by Dr. Ralph Earle and Dr. Gregory Crow, the authors speak in one chapter of our response to injured spouse and children from the standpoint of being more concerned about their needs for recovery and amends, and less about what we want from them..."Just as the first step in your own recovery program required you to admit your problem and your inability to manage your own life because of it, the first step to take in helping your children recover is to talk with them frankly and openly—acknowledging that a problem exists and verifying that the troubles they observed in the past did in fact happen, that they were not imagining things or making mountains out of molehills." The book suggests that by your frank honesty with family, you empower them to restore their own emotional integrity and health. We addicts often fear such empowerment, because those we love become capable of making rational decisions about the boundaries of their love, to determine the limits of the relationship they wish to have with us, and this can be scary territory.

There is hope, as Hope and Recovery, pg 55 says: "Most of us had acted as our own harshest critics, so we were quite surprised to find that many people had actually forgiven us long before we were willing to forgive ourselves. In order to really recover, we had to let go of our shame and guilt about the past and learn to live in the here and now." Demonstrating new character in the here and now is our best hope to either restoring damaged love, or welcoming new love in our lives. The fear, shame, and guilt that drive deception also drive away any possibility of loving relationships.

If we want love:

- First recover and become better people today
- Show respect for others by being honest and open
- Learn to put others' needs before your wants
- Forgive ourselves and accept others' forgiveness
- Reject the myth that you can make someone love you – respect their right to choose

When we learn how to love we will be loved in return, genuinely, and experience dimensions of human love we never before contemplated.