

SCA DC NEWSLETTER

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By SCA Metro DC Intergroup

Sept/Oct 2007

My Story - My First Step

By K. N.

I discovered masturbation at 13 years old, the same year I first got my period. I often hid in the basement so that I could do it in private.

Masturbation was an important escape for me from my father who physically and verbally abused me and my brother. His bursts of anger were completely unpredictable. In an instant we could go from laughing and having a good time to experiencing the fury of his rage. It took so little, maybe only one of us knocking something onto the floor while playing. We were hit, threatened, and insulted. My dad often didn't even make sense – he would accuse me of being both “totally selfish” and “too generous.”

My mother never did anything to stop it. For whatever reason, my dad never hit her. She used to say to us proudly that she'd never let him, yet she didn't protect her own children.

At 13 I also had my first boyfriend. He was my best friend's brother, 3 years older than me. I was thrilled to have a boyfriend, and especially flattered that an older guy was attracted to me, but I quickly became miserable in the relationship. He was my first kiss, and I wasn't ready for it when he shoved his tongue into my mouth – in front of his sister, no less. I didn't want to do anything more than kissing, but in the next few months he pushed me to go further and further. He started asking if he could perform oral sex on me. I said no, and he quickly escalated from nagging to insisting. One day, at his house, he finally pressured me into doing it. We were in his living room, and his mother was in the kitchen. I was terrified that she could walk in at any moment. He didn't force me to do it, but he knew full well I didn't want to, and I didn't enjoy it. I went numb and couldn't even feel what he was doing. The experience was very traumatic - years later I freaked out when a man wanted to perform oral sex on me. We broke up not too long after that.

I didn't date anymore in high school. By the time I got to college, I was desperate for a relationship, and I was attracted

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The Tool of Sponsorship

By J. S.

As I write this, my inner addict is trying to convince me to contact someone who has been an object of sexual and romantic obsession, a person who is “bad news” for my recovery. The addict says, “What's wrong with calling just to say hello?” Fortunately, my own words to a sponsee recently are still echoing in my head: “Remember that by admitting we are powerless, we realize we cannot afford the luxury of even ‘saying hello’ to an acting out partner. Doing so might cause us to become triggered and soon be ‘past the point of no return.’” Whether or not my sponsee listens to me, I have been helped by the Tool of Sponsorship. In fact, my sponsee got me out of another situation a couple of weeks ago. An acting out partner called me on a night when I had agreed to meet with my sponsee after a meeting. I did not get together with the acting out partner, not because I have any will power (I'm totally powerless over my addiction) but because it would have been ludicrous for me to have to tell my sponsee, “Sorry I can't meet with you tonight, I'm acting out instead.” Or to have lied to him when I'm trying to encourage rigorous honesty. Phone calls to my own sponsor have also helped me to refrain from acting out on many occasions.

“Sponsorship is two people with the same problem helping each other to work the program. It can provide a framework for a sexual recovery plan and for doing the Twelve Steps, and can bring emotional support at difficult times.” Remembering the part about “two people with the same problem” helps prevent me from allowing myself to be put on a pedestal as a sponsor, or from putting my own sponsor on a pedestal. Most of us who have been in SCA (or any recovery fellowship) for a long time have had the experience of a sponsor dropping out of the program. It's helpful to “take what you need and leave the rest” when it comes to anyone in recovery, including a sponsor.

In my opinion, the sponsor should help the sponsee to formulate a Sexual Recovery Plan and to provide guidance through the Twelve

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SCA NEWS & EVENTS

Be part of DC SCA's online recovery support group. Email DC-SCA-Newsgroup@googlegroups.com to join.

DCA Social Event: C&O Canal Walk & optional boat ride on **Sunday, Sept 30 at 1 pm.** Meet at the Visitor Center (301-767-3714: 11710 MacArthur Blvd.) at 1 pm for the walk and/or 2:30 pm for the boat ride. Contact S. F.

Please contact your editors, R. F., J. S., or D. P., if you would like to share your story or contribute in other ways to the DC SCA newsletter.

My Story continued

to almost all of my friends. I started making out with one guy regularly, but I didn't even like spending time with him. He lived in my dorm, and if he wasn't in when I went to see him, I went to make out with his friend across the hall, who I also didn't really like. Soon, another friend of theirs became my third "back up," and of course he was a jerk too. I felt like a slut, but I felt like I couldn't stop.

The next year I had an actual boyfriend, and he and I spent almost all of our time together. Practically the only thing we did separately was go to classes. I isolated myself with him, neglecting my friendships. I created an identity for both of us; I didn't know who I was without him. He was more than happy to let me do this, as he didn't know himself either. Looking back, I can't believe anyone stayed friends with me. I broke up with him in my last semester of college, but we still fooled around. As graduation got closer, I became desperate for attention, and would go to parties topless. A couple nights I walked around campus completely naked. People assumed I was drunk, but I never was; usually, I hadn't had any alcohol at all. I thought I was different from all the "out of control" drunk people around me. I realize now that I was far from sober; in fact, compared to most of them, I was more inebriated - in my own way.

After college, I'm sure I seemed a lot saner to everyone who knew me, but my secret life was much more dangerous than anything I'd done before. With no friends nearby I was very lonely, but instead of making more friends, I went online to find random hook-ups. I'd exchange emails with a guy for a week or so, then invite him over to my apartment. I convinced myself that I was "dating" these guys, but I eventually realized that we didn't do anything except have sex. I was meeting new people all the time and was busy every weekend, but that was the loneliest and most miserable time in my life.

I finally realized I wanted an actual relationship, so I found a guy who didn't want just sex. Problem was, he was married and had two young children. I know this is a common story: he repeatedly promised me he was going to leave his wife, but he never did. The intense, melodramatic relationship lasted only a couple months.

As that was ending, I met my current boyfriend, Jonathan. Finally I had an amazing guy who treated me well and respected me. We fell in love, but my long-hidden fear of intimacy soon started to sabotage our relationship. Thank God that Jonathan, a food addict, recognized that I too had an addiction. As soon as I really accepted that I was a sex addict, I started getting help. I am powerless over sexual compulsion, and my life has long been unmanageable, but I finally have hope that I can be happy. Sharing my first step and receiving amazing support and understanding from other recovering addicts has reassured me that I can be as brave and as honest as the program demands.

Sponsorship continued

Steps. For example on Step Five, where we "admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs," the "human being" is usually assumed to be our sponsor. The sponsee should periodically check in with the sponsor to report on their progress (or lack thereof in some cases). It is important to have an initial meeting so that mutually agreeable guidelines can be established. Of course, we often bring our character defects to these sponsor-sponsee relationships, so our usual pattern of unrealistic expectations building into resentments can develop. That's why the initial meeting is so important, even though it can feel awkward. The sponsor can give some guidelines about how often the sponsee should call, and during what times, and what to do in case of a potential acting out emergency in the wee hours of the morning. Usually it's up to the sponsee to call the sponsor, although sometimes a sponsor will call a sponsee if they've been out of contact for a while.

I have found it helpful to choose a sponsor who attends at least one of the same weekly meetings I go to, since sometimes I'm "hiding out" from my sponsor, ashamed of what I've done or haven't done. Old scripts of seeing a sponsor as an authority figure can creep into play. Seeing a sponsor in a meeting can be an ice-breaker to help us reconnect.

Usually, a sponsor will strongly encourage the sponsee to volunteer for a service position. This can be an important way for the sponsee to feel more connected to the program, and to "keep coming back," especially to the meeting for which the sponsee holds a service position.

As a sponsee, I have found that checking in with a sponsor can be helpful when I'm having tunnel vision and can only see two alternatives: acting out or sitting alone feeling sorry for myself (which can lead to acting out). A sponsor will often help me see other possibilities: top line behaviors such as taking a walk, going to a meeting, seeing a good movie by myself or with a recovery friend, etc. Sometimes a sponsor will be unavailable for a period of time due to overseas travel or other circumstances. It's important for the sponsee to find another program person (usually someone with strong recovery) to serve as a substitute sponsor.

If either the sponsor or sponsee feels that it's time to move on, it's important to do so with gratitude for lessons learned. Developing resentments can lead to acting out. Also, we'll inevitably see our former sponsor/sponsee at meetings, and it's important to remember "Principles, not personalities." It's a good idea to find another sponsor right away, despite our addiction's desire to have "free rein" to do whatever we feel like doing. Note: Before letting go of a sponsor/sponsee relationship, it's important to examine our true motives for wanting to do so.

I have found the Tool of Sponsorship to be central to my recovery, keeping me focused on the Steps and my Sexual Recovery Plan as well as feeling connected on a deeper level.