

SCA DC NEWSLETTER

Volume 4, Issue 5

By SCA Metro DC Intergroup

September/October 2009

My Story

By A. W.

On August 21, 2003, I walked into my first 12-step meeting to address my compulsive behaviors related to sex, masturbation and pornography. I was in the midst of the most confusing time of my life -- my wife had caught me looking at transvestite pornography and my marriage was in crisis.

Thankfully, my wife insisted that we see a couple's counselor to discuss the issue. After just one session, the counselor said, "You, as a couple, do not need to be here. But you, A [REDACTED] are a sex addict and you need to get help." While the counselor was ultimately unable to save my marriage, my ex-wife's insistence that I get help provided a gift to me that I could never repay: recovery.

When that counselor told me I was a sex addict, it was as if a 20-year fog had been lifted from me. I had been in counseling for years, always knowing that "something was wrong," but never able to quite put a finger on it. Suddenly, though, it became clear what the problem was: my addiction.

My addiction had developed from when I was eight and a boy with whom I walked home with every day would bring me to his house and show me his father's collection of hundreds of pornography magazines and numerous videos. Though it started then, the addiction developed slowly through high school. My shyness mostly held me back from pursuing with real girls the type of sexual relationships I had seen in those videos and magazines and had fantasized about since. However, when I got to college in the late 1990s, the internet age was booming and within a matter of months I had discovered online pornography, chat rooms and courage with women in the form of alcohol.

By the time I was confronted by my ex-wife and the counselor, my addiction had reached new heights. I worked in an office in which our work spaces were partitioned by 4 1/2 foot cubicles, and yet daily I was viewing pornographic pictures and videos. It also was not uncommon for me to spend 15-20 minutes at a time in the bathroom stalls -- while on morning deadline for the publication for which I worked -- fantasizing about the pictures and videos I had just watched and masturbating. My work hours

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Acceptance

By A. O.

If you've been around the "rooms" for awhile, you've heard someone say something about Page 449 in the AA Big Book. Of course, as some of you know, the AA Big Book got reprinted and the famous words about acceptance were moved to another page. But recently I discovered that these famous words are also reprinted in the SCA Blue Book on page 47.

"And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because some person, place, thing, or situation some fact of my life-(is) unacceptable to me and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment." And there's more to read on page 47 so look it up afterwards.

I am no saint and I'm writing to say I can't practice this line with any perfection. But I call tell you a few stories of trying to put this into practice and how these words have come back to me through other literature & programs. For me acceptance has not always been easy and sometimes these words have been the last thing I want to hear about in a meeting or to read.

In 2006, right before our anniversary, I had confronted my companion in a letter with what I believed to be an addiction he had. I had told him I had been secretly going to therapy about us and that I had gotten into a coda-type 12 step program for myself. I told him things needed to change, that "we" were not okay. For the year after this confrontation, things seemed to be moving nowhere for us, still. I remember taking a walk at lunch in the hot sun from my temp job and I was angry (!) that there seemed to be no improvement, that I still felt in pain most of the time and that I was not happy. I prayed on that walk and I decided that somehow things must be better in a way that I could not see at the moment but that God could see them. I accepted that everything was as it was whether I liked it or not, and that somehow God was in the mix and progress was going on. This was practicing acceptance though it was not comforting at all. Today things are waaaaay better for my companion and me, but it took much longer for us to change & grow than my expectations at that time in my life.

Before things got better between my companion and me, I had begun developing emotionally charged relationships with other guys. Nothing ever became sexual but the feelings and desires I had were pretty strong and if circumstances were different, I could have been unfaithful. I had two of these connections going on

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SCA NEWS & EVENTS

Legal Expertise: Intergroup is looking for an attorney to help them incorporate as a 501 (3)c, to permit tax deductible donations to DC-SCA.

Recording Stories: After a hiatus, Intergroup is moving forward with phone recordings of brief SCA stories of hope and recovery. If you can assist Intergroup with either one of these, please contact B [REDACTED] at [REDACTED].

Please contact DM at [REDACTED] DP at [REDACTED] or RF at [REDACTED] if you would like to share your story or write an article for the newsletter.

My Story continued

were slightly different than my ex-wife's -- I would get home about two hours before she did -- and without fail, I would watch pornography DVDs that I had purchased. I was wasting hours every day viewing pornography, fantasizing and masturbating. I was unable to keep up with my work, support my ex-wife, be a good friend or family member. I was only able to maintain a base level of competence to ensure that I could stay out of trouble and maintain the status quo.

What scares me most, looking back on that time, was how unaware of what I was doing at the time. I was so in denial that I quite literally did not even understand that I was doing something wrong.

Within months of beginning attending 12-step programs for my addiction, my life had vastly improved. Without the distraction of pornography, I was able to focus more on my work and as a result, I was promoted. I was able to identify and examine the sexual abuse of which I was a victim as a child, and begin working toward addressing issues associated with that trespass. I also began to understand the connection between my emotions, or rather my desire not to feel my emotions, and my sexual acting out.

I recently celebrated my six year anniversary in the program. In that time, I've learned that living my life daily requires the three P's: patience, persistence and perspective.

- **PATIENCE:** I must realize that even though my addict wants solutions now, those answers might be a while. In the meantime, I have to sit through those uncomfortable feelings, or talk about them or ask for help. Furthermore, my recovery will not happen in one day, just one day at a time. It is a process, not an end, and realizing that brings me to ...
- **PERSISTENCE:** I have to keep coming back. I must continually participate in my own recovery, by going to meetings, by connecting with people emotionally, by developing myself spiritually. My goal, on a day-to-day basis, is to become a better person, one that I like and respect. The 12 steps are merely a suggested guide to achieving that goal. And, in looking at it that way, I have achieved ...
- **PERSPECTIVE:** There is always another way of looking at a situation. If I am fearful of a situation or event, I might look at it in a different way, and perhaps wonder why it invokes fear in me.

I am by no means recovered -- I still slip from time to time -- but I am now in a life-long process of recovery. Although my recovery is not without its setbacks, I am slowly becoming the person I want to be. And, I live my life in recovery in accordance with two more P's: progress, not perfection.

Acceptance continued

simultaneously in my life and in my head. I kept my sponsor and others in the program up to date on this activity to stay honest with myself about it. The creation & need of these relationships were driven by the lack of sexual intimacy with my partner. I kept thinking I can be celibate with my companion and make our relationship work. But I had to finally accept that I really needed healthy sober sex and that I wanted that with my companion. I had to accept my own self dishonesty. These liaisons existed because I couldn't face my own need for sexual & emotional intimacy. Not accepting my need fed into the creation of these liaisons. So I talked with my companion about going to therapy-- no ifs, ands or buts-- because I knew I had to admit that things were not okay and I needed us to change, if that was possible.

About 2008 I purchased Melanie Beattie's Codependents Guide to the Twelve Steps and she talked about practicing gratitude. She said that complaining and negativity is part of the disease but that it's okay to complain if we then practice gratitude about whatever it is we're complaining about. I've been working a steady job since 2008 but money is very tight for me because my companion was laid off about 2009 and I worry about money constantly. As I drive to work I consciously say out loud that I am grateful for this job, for the money that it brings, and for the way things are working out financially for us. This act of gratitude changes my mood, switches off the fear and is an action of acceptance and trust. And I am finding that HP is providing and that things are working out for me to cover all my expenses.

I work for a guy I knew from a former job. I used to put this guy on a pedestal because he seemed to embody the principles of our shared profession. However, he had not supervised me at that time and I came to learn that he has a penchant for pointing out errors and never gives praise. I remember driving home from work, hot and angry at him about his comments throughout the work day. I had to confront myself that I couldn't change this guy; I couldn't please him enough or balance his attitude to make things better between us. Instead I needed to expect that if and when I did something wrong, he would tell me--that that was what I could expect of him. It calmed me down and I stopped consciously being resentful toward him. I accepted that this guy wasn't all I thought he was and that nothing that I could do, say or think would change the way he worked with me.

I hope these stories of trying to practice acceptance are useful to you.

I'll keep coming back and I'll see ya in a meeting somewhere.