



**Sexaholics
Anonymous**

**Do You have a
Problem with
Pornography
or Lust on the
Internet?**

Sexaholics Anonymous Statement of Principle

We have a solution. We don't claim it's for everybody, but for us, it works. If you identify with us and think you may share our problem, we'd like to share our solution with you (SA 2).

In defining sobriety, we do not speak for those outside Sexaholics Anonymous. We can only speak for ourselves. Thus, for the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. In SA's sobriety definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and a woman. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust (SA 191-192).

*Passed by the General Delegate Assembly
February 2010*

The only requirement for SA membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober according to the SA sobriety definition.

Any two or more sexaholics gathered together for SA sobriety according to the SA sobriety definition may call themselves an SA group.

Meetings that do not adhere to and follow Sexaholics Anonymous' sobriety statement as set forth in the foregoing Statement of Principle adopted by the General Delegate Assembly in 2010 are not SA meetings and shall not call themselves SA meetings.

*Addendum to the Statement of Principle passed by
the General Delegate Assembly on July 2016.*

An Invitation

- Has your illicit Internet use put your job at risk?
- Have you lost needed sleep due to obsessive Internet use?
- Have you lied to others to cover your Internet activity?
- Have you missed important events or meetings because you were on the Internet?

Maybe some of these questions apply to you. If so, we want you to know you are not alone. Some of us spent hours looking at pornographic images or pursuing illicit sexual contacts over the Internet. Chat rooms and porn sites, freely accessible on the World Wide Web, were consuming our lives. Our obsession with sex and lust had invaded our homes, marriages, workplaces, and anywhere a laptop, hand-held device, or cell phone could go. We were hooked.

To break free of all this, we realized we needed a Power greater than ourselves and greater than our drug. Through working the program of Sexaholics Anonymous, we found this Higher Power and began to recover.

In the following stories, SA members share what works for us in overcoming our addiction to Internet chat rooms and pornography. We are grateful, recovering sexaholics, staying sexually sober and growing in recovery one day at a time. If you want to stop abusing the Internet and you identify with the stories in this pamphlet, you may wish to explore further our simple program of recovery. We hope that you too may discover a path to joyous freedom.

We have a solution. We don't claim that it's for everybody, but for us, it works. If you identify with us and think you may share our problem, we'd like to share our solution with you (*Sexaholics Anonymous 2*).

Members Share

There is a Solution

It's 11 p.m. again, way past my bedtime, but I'm still sitting at the computer. I'm so exhausted I can hardly type. I've been searching the Internet for sex for more than six hours straight. There were things I needed to do, but they will have to wait. I'm forgetting things and starting to be careless. Tomorrow I am not even turning on the computer.

Morning comes and I look at my face in the mirror. There are dark circles under my eyes. I'm unshaven, unkempt, looking like a mess. It's going to be another long day at work.

Now it's evening and I'm glad this day is over. I have to do laundry, shopping, and some errands, but I'm pumped up on cybersex and Internet porn. Every woman looks like she could be "the One." I stare at every one with lust in my heart. I am lost again in fantasy. I can't wait to get home again and turn on the computer. I tell myself, "Not tonight," but only finish half the things I meant to do and rush home to get online. Again.

I started my sexaholic journey with men's magazines that I found around the house. As technology advanced, so did my addiction.

I started with 8 millimeter movies, then progressed to Super 8. Beta was next, then VHS. When the computer was available, I immediately started into chat rooms, images, and setting up meetings with people.

I always felt I was different from most people. I met a woman on the Internet and had an affair with her. She became pregnant and was adamant about keeping the baby. I didn't want to have a child with this woman. I prayed: "God if you get me out of this, I'll be good." When she miscarried, I continued my ways. When I got a call from a woman I was chatting with, my girlfriend (now my wife) heard the phone message and asked me who it was. I lied. The betrayal and denial continued until one day when I saw a TV program about sex addicts.

I found that I could relate to the stories. I decided to seek help. Endlessly trying to stop without success was proof of how powerless I was. I saw no way out short of divine intervention. The downward spiral stopped when I found SA.

I remember that first meeting as if it were yesterday, though now it is over seven years ago. Three members gave me a newcomer orientation. I felt as if I had stepped into a warm, welcoming home. I wasn't alone anymore. Here were men and women who understood and shared my struggle, but had changed and were willing to help me change. No longer was I afraid to share my thoughts and experiences.

I believe now that God had a plan for me all along. God's intention for me was to get well so I could help others get well. It was never any more complicated than that. God saved me from the full consequences of my addiction so that I might live to help others.

Today my life is very different. The Internet is no longer my master. I am tempted but not obsessed. I don't act on the temptation because I have tools I can use to help me through the rough times. I am part of a recovery community that is much greater than myself. I was powerless to stop my behavior and change, but God has changed me through this program.

This disease is more powerful than I am. It brought me to my knees. I believe that God gave me this disease to bring me closer to Him and so that I can share my hope and recovery with others. For SA and the people in the fellowship, and God's love, I will always be grateful.

I'm Not Alone Anymore

I left home at 21 and moved in with my boyfriend. I had been attending college full-time and had two part-time jobs, but I dropped out of school and work so I could spend more time acting out sexually. I felt a lot of shame, so I convinced my boyfriend to marry me. Sometimes we acted out by watching porn. When my husband wasn't home, I would look at the porn and masturbate. We were both sex addicts, and we raged at each other daily. Lust killed our relationship.

Three years later, I separated from my husband and moved back into my parents' house. In the separation I got the computer. I would view the porn my husband had downloaded. Sometimes I would delete a video after being disgusted with myself for acting out while watching it. Then I would watch another.

That year I acted out with a former teacher from college. We acted out once and I

became obsessed with him but he was done with me. I stalked him online, called him at work, and went to his office. He told me to stop. In my despair over losing this “connection,” I became involved in Internet chatting. I stayed up late at night chatting about sex. First I chatted only in Christian chat rooms, then singles chat rooms, then the married-and-still-looking chat rooms. I tried to live out a fantasy with others by typing sexual conversations. Next I got a camera and transmitted explicit pictures of myself online. The reaction did not fit my fantasy and I felt less than human. But I repeated this.

I was feeling crushed by the shame of acting out with strangers online. I was obsessed with thoughts of acting out with my ex-teacher. I was obsessed with the forbidden. I began to wonder if I could be a sex addict.

One day, immediately after acting out in cyberspace and becoming distressed, I searched for help online, found an “S” fellowship, and called a member. I went to my first S meeting that night. I was the only woman at a meeting of about eight men. The men tried to reassure me but after attending only three meetings, I searched the Internet for a woman’s meeting and found an SA meeting for women only. I went faithfully every week, stayed sober for a month and collected a 30-day chip. But I was not committed. I remember thinking, “I can’t call myself a sexaholic!” That would mean I was a “sicko,” someone who masturbates and struggles with the lust to masturbate. That is not me!

Sure I masturbated, but *my* version was different! Eventually I stopped going to meetings. I decided I could work the SA

program on my own. Guess what happened? I went back to my same behaviors and took more risks. I began browsing the Internet for porn I hadn't seen before, and went back to acting out online. I began going out to night clubs and dating again. My addiction was spinning out of control. I was acting out at work during my breaks. I was divorcing my husband because he was emotionally and physically abusive, but I acted out with him again. I thought of finding a job in the sex industry so I could lust full-time. I wanted to kill myself. I thought I had to act out or I would die, yet acting out was killing my spirit, my creativity, my personality, and all joy. Within months I had hit bottom again.

I came back to SA, feeling defeated and hopeless. I went back to the women's only SA meeting. They did not yell at me or ask me what I had been doing since I left. I began to identify myself as a sexaholic. I struggled to get a 30-day chip and then a 60-day chip. I kept going to meetings. I could not figure out how to stay sober. My triggers became more frequent and the desire to have sex with myself and others returned. The once-a-week meetings were no longer enough for me. I became willing to do whatever it took to stay sober and grow in recovery. I started attending an early morning SA meeting of men and women.

Before I went to meetings with men, I prayed I would be shielded from lusting after others and being lusted after. At first I kept my head down and listened. To my surprise, I heard my story told over and over again. I began to feel alive again. I took another chance and started attending a very large mixed meeting at the suggestion of my sponsor. I was amazed to meet people who had ten or more years of sobriety! I hadn't

known that was possible. I started to share at meetings and I did not die. I was welcomed as one of them.

Today, I am proud to say that I am a recovering sexaholic who loves going to SA meetings, and I am supported by hundreds of people in the SA fellowship, both women and men. I am not alone anymore.

Escape from the Web

I don't remember when I discovered Internet pornography, but I know now that I was in trouble from the moment I first saw a hardcore image on my screen. I'd been looking at photographs of women since my early teen years—magazines and well-thumbed novels we passed around at school. The excitement came in the fantasies in my head and the descriptions on the page. Of course I masturbated to them all—and I figured my buddies did too. I didn't talk about it because there was something shameful about it.

I never outgrew that boyhood habit. I spent my twenties acting out the fantasies with women my own age who seemed willing to go along. If they weren't willing, I'd just move on to someone else. I continued to use books and magazines for extra excitement, and to tide me over between "relationships".

Eventually I got tired of that lifestyle and got married. My wife didn't match the images I saw or imagined, so I continued to masturbate to those images. I began finding excuses for not having sex. I preferred fantasy women to the real one I had married, and the marriage ended.

Compulsive use of alcohol and drugs eventually took a toll on my life. I joined Alcoholics Anonymous and stopped drinking

and taking drugs. I met the woman who became my second wife, and we settled into a happy marriage. I even stopped masturbating for a while and began to enjoy an active and fulfilling sex life.

Then we got the computer, and I discovered a compulsion much deeper than my other addictions. We'd been married a few years when I started to explore the Internet and found Internet porn. I started spending more and more time alone with the computer, searching out ever more explicit images.

At first I didn't pay for it. There was more than I could use for free even staying up late. In time I found porn sites that offered the fantasies I'd read about as a boy and I subscribed. It wasn't much money, and I didn't see the harm. I could give my imagination a rest and let the computer do the work.

My wife did see the harm in it though. She was devastated by my disrespect for her, and for all women. I'd never thought of the women (and men) in the videos and pictures as real people. They were just actors or models who were paid for what they did. But my wife was so upset that we separated. We went into marriage counseling and, at the suggestion of a friend, I went to SA, and began my recovery.

Recovery from my Internet pornography addiction has been a slow but steady process. I can still get an urge to escape into pornography when things don't go my way, when I get frustrated at work or home, or when I'm hungry, angry, lonely or tired. I've come to realize that the pornographic sessions on the computer start long before I turn on the computer and that I need steady, sometimes daily, fellowship with recovering

addicts as well as work on my character defects, making amends, and reaching out to others to stay sober.

I use my computer for work, and I've started switching it off, no matter how busy I am, if I find myself idly clicking toward lust images. Like a lust-look on the street, I know in my heart if I am being driven by a desire for the lustful thrill that I think will make me feel better. I have found I can shut down and start over.

It is by working the program of SA that I stay sober and am helped to find a God who works in my life. SA helps me know when lust is driving my attitudes, thoughts and actions, and when it is, I can turn to my Higher Power with a simple prayer or make a phone call to another addict who understands my problem. I have learned that "the first drink" of Internet pornography gets me drunk. In SA I've discovered that in times of temptation my God is always there ready to help me to make a real connection.

Hooked on Lust

In 1988, when I married my third wife, I was still hooked on lust. Eventually the Internet came along and I got hooked on chatting with women online. Innocently at first (yeah, right), I kept getting worse.

I would invest huge amounts of time cultivating online relationships. I thought of myself as an honest, nice guy to these women, but in reality I was using them for my own selfish pleasure. My wife traveled for work, so I had plenty of time to goof off online. I worked by myself in my own business and I eventually spent all eight work hours with my cyber girlfriends in chat rooms.

I was totally consumed by lust. I couldn't stop. I had built up a duplex inside my head. One side was the husband, father, church treasurer, worship band musician, etc. In the other side I was hopelessly addicted to cyber-sex. There was a wall down the middle and I was pretty good at keeping it from leaking, but my disease took its toll on me.

My life began each night when the lights went out. My lust-driven mind would digest all the toxins I had picked up on the Internet that day. My lust disease kept getting worse. I had progressed from Internet girlfriends to real girlfriends. I had an affair with one of my customers, and my insanity kicked into overdrive. "I don't feel guilty," I told myself. I wanted more, and I wanted freedom from marriage so I could indulge myself without the guilt of adultery hanging over my head.

One morning I asked my wife for a divorce. On her insistence, we did a lot of talking and praying that day, and I woke up the next day feeling God's presence. He had been right behind me all along. I was the one who had turned away.

From that first spiritual experience, my life started to turn around. I started going to SA meetings and got an SA sponsor. I began working the Twelve Steps and sponsoring others, and the miracle happened. God has kept me sexually sober ever since. And God has been working miracles in our marriage ever since. Next year my wife and I will celebrate our 20th wedding anniversary. Through this program, we have begun to learn what we need to build a healthy relationship.

Excerpt from the book *Sexaholics Anonymous*

What Is a Sexaholic and What Is Sexual Sobriety?

We can only speak for ourselves. The specialized nature of Sexaholics Anonymous can best be understood in terms of what we call the *sexaholic*. The sexaholic has taken himself or herself out of the whole context of what is right or wrong. He or she has lost control, no longer has the power of choice, and is not free to stop. Lust has become an addiction. Our situation is like that of the alcoholic who can no longer tolerate alcohol and must stop drinking altogether but is hooked and cannot stop. So it is with the sexaholic, or sex drunk, who can no longer tolerate lust but cannot stop.

Thus, *for the sexaholic*, any form of sex with one's self or with partners other than the spouse* is progressively addictive and destructive. We also see that lust is the driving force behind our sexual acting out, and true sobriety includes progressive victory over lust. These conclusions were forced upon us in the crucible of our experiences and recovery; we have no other options. But we have found that acceptance of these facts is the key to a happy and joyous freedom we could otherwise never know.

This will and should discourage many inquirers who admit to sexual obsession or compulsion but who simply want to control and enjoy it, much as the alcoholic would like to control and enjoy drinking. Until we

*In SA's sobriety definition, the term 'spouse' refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and a woman (*SA* 192).

had been driven to the point of despair, until we really wanted to stop but could not, we did not give ourselves to this program of recovery. Sexaholics Anonymous is for those who know they have no other option but to stop, and their own enlightened self-interest must tell them this (SA 3-4).

Our definition of sobriety represents, *for us*, the basic and necessary condition for lasting freedom from the pain that brought us to SA. We have found that nothing else works. (SA 1-2).

Quotes from *Sexaholics Anonymous* are acknowledged by the use of the initials SA and the page number.

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The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over lust—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
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 Him 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 Him, praying only for knowledge of His 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 sexaholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on SA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lust-ing and become sexually sober.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or Sexaholics Anonymous as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sexaholic who still suffers.
6. An SA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sexaholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sexaholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SA 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, films, and TV.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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*I am responsible. When anyone,
Anywhere reaches out for help,
I want the hand of SA always to be there.
And for that: I am responsible*



Additional copies of this pamphlet and a complete literature list can be ordered from the Sexaholics Anonymous International Central Office at the address and phone number below.

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