

## **Welcome** **excerpted © 1997 S.L.A.A.**

### **What kinds of S.L.A.A. meetings are there?**

One or more members of S.L.A.A. share experience, strength and hope by telling their "stories." Each speaker's story provides an opportunity to reflect on our own history, feelings, and challenges.

### **Topic Discussion Meeting**

The group focuses on one of the Twelve Steps, often reading out of the S.L.A.A. basic text, *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*. The group might also have one person speak on the Step. The meeting is then open for other members to share on that Step.

### **Getting Current**

The meeting addresses specific concerns of newcomers to S.L.A.A., or beginners on the road to recovery. Topics often revolve around the first three Steps, sponsorship, bottom lines, abstinence, or withdrawal.

### **What can I expect at an S.L.A.A. meeting?**

An S.L.A.A. meeting is run by its members. Typically, there is a member who guides the meeting, another who is entrusted with the group's finances, and perhaps one who orders the literature for the group. These "trusted servants" are volunteers elected to regular service positions in the group by its members.

### **What do other people in the meeting do?**

Typically, newcomers can speak at any time during the regular portion of the meeting. At some meetings, a specific time is reserved especially for newcomers. This is a time when newcomers can share why they have come to S.L.A.A. or ask questions about the program, which can be addressed after the meeting. Remember, you need not speak if you don't want to.

### **What's with the money basket?**

S.L.A.A. is based on spiritual (not religious) principles. The references to God or to a Higher Power acknowledge our powerlessness over this addiction; our faith that a power greater than ourselves, whom some call "God," can and will restore us to sanity; and our decision to trust this Higher Power to do just that. We have found that acknowledgement of some Higher Power is crucial to recovery from our self-destructive behaviors. Members are not required to adhere to any doctrine, either religious or secular. You are welcome in S.L.A.A., whether you are of any faith, or of none.

### **Tools for the Newcomer**

- **Names and phone numbers of sober S.L.A.A. members**
- **Pamphlets:**
  - 40 Questions for Self-Diagnosis
  - Suggestions for Newcomers
  - Addiction & Recovery
  - Withdrawal: Gateway to Freedom, Hope, and Joy

- Conference approved literature and tapes
- Sponsor
- Study the Twelve Steps
- Personal Journal

*God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference.*

- **Slogans:**

- Take What You Like and Leave The Rest
- Keep it Simple
- First Things First
- Principles not Personalities
- Honesty, Openness, Willingness (H.O.W.)
- Keep Coming Back -- It Works!

- **Tips for the Newcomer**

- Attend several different meetings to get a flavor of the variety of S.L.A.A. meetings in your area.
- Although hand-holding and hugging can be healing, physical contact is always optional, inside or outside the meeting.
- It's a good idea to have some phone numbers of sober members of S.L.A.A. before you leave the meeting. You may want to get a new phone number at every meeting you attend. If a phone list is not available, ask individual members whether they are willing to receive calls.
- Become open to the collective wisdom of the group. Through participation in S.L.A.A., we learn new ways to reduce alienation and isolation from others and to set healthier boundaries.
- Read the literature. Keep a journal. Share your feelings.
- Consider your priorities. We might be tempted to think that S.L.A.A. meetings are a good place to find a relationship. Those of us who have tried this, soon found that, to recover, we needed to change our focus. We decided upon a specific period of time (usually several months to a year), in which we would not be involved in any romantic and/or sexual relationships. We took this time to concentrate on our program of recovery.

- **Developing these supportive qualities can be a great help, too:**

- Gratitude
- A Positive Attitude