

JANUARY 2020
QUICK GUIDE TO WORKING THE SAA PROGRAM



WORK
GUIDE
1-4 WEEKS

SCRIPT

RECOVERY GUIDE
WITH THE GREEN BOOK

4 ONE HOUR
SESSIONS

INTERNAL PUBLICATION – APPROVED BY THE NYC SAA INTERGROUP EVENTS COMMITTEE

Overview of the Recovery Process

Welcome to Sex Addicts Anonymous Green Book Recovery Workshop, a re-enactment of a series of 1946 Alcoholics Anonymous Beginners' Meetings during which participants TAKE ALL Twelve Steps and recover from alcoholism. Yes, we will TAKE ALL Twelve Steps in these four one-hour sessions, and we will "watch people recover" right before our very eyes.

We are grateful to Alcoholics Anonymous for the gift of the Twelve Steps which SAA has used as its foundation. This is a Green Book Recovery Workshop, and we use the Green Book as our source to understand the 12 Steps as outlined by Sex Addicts Anonymous.

Occasionally we might make reference to phrases that are universal in meaning but that may be first found in the literature of Alcoholics Anonymous – '**Spirit of the Universe**' for instance. We have kept in a few such instances of this AA terminology when it serves our purpose well.

Let's open the Workshop with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

When AA was young, recovery rates were quite high. So, how can we reconnect with this miraculous past? AA's remarkable recovery rate during that period was largely due to its' members taking all 12 Steps relatively quickly, in 4 one-hour sessions over one month.

Sounds incredibly simple doesn't it? Well, it was simple, and it worked!

So, imagine it's 1946. You are sitting in the meeting room of a local church and the first of the four one-hour sessions is about to begin.

Session 1 (Steps 1, 2, and 3)

WELCOME to the first of four one-hour Green Book Recovery Workshop sessions that will change your life! During these sessions, you will learn how to recover from addictive sexual behavior by working the Twelve Steps as outlined in the book of Sex Addicts Anonymous.

SAA has found an answer to this insidious illness. As SAA members, we are here to share our solution with you – a spiritually-based plan of action that will reduce your suffering and help you to find a new way of life.

Our names are _____ and _____, and we are members of Sex Addicts Anonymous. We lead these meetings to help ensure our sobriety. We receive no payment for this service. Our reward is to watch people recover and to see them help others.

We will start by reading a statement from the introduction of the book Sex Addicts Anonymous:

“Our primary purpose is to stop our addictive sexual behavior and to help others recover from sexual addiction. We find a new way of living through the SAA program, and carry our message to others seeking recovery. Membership is open to all who have a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.”¹

This statement sums up the SAA program quite well, we find a new way of life that helps us stop our addictive sexual behavior and we look to help others. We also understand that the only requirement to continue being a member of this program is to have the desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.

As the title of the book implies, our society is anonymous. You can be assured we will protect your anonymity at this Workshop and at any other SAA meeting. We ask that you do the same for us and for everyone else here.

To complete each session within an hour and still provide ample time for questions, we request that you write down anything that you need clarified or do not understand and save it until the end of the session. We will try to answer those questions then.

The SAA Green Book is the only book we will discuss during these sessions. If you cannot find something we say in the Green Book, consider it to be our opinion. We will do our best to keep our opinions out of these discussions. We are here to carry the SAA message using the format practiced by the AA early members.

The Beginners' Meetings started in the early 1940's when AA began growing so rapidly it became impossible for the older members to individually take newcomers through the Steps.

We've matched Newcomers with SAA members who are willing to be Workshop Sponsors through the four one-hour sessions. In addition, the Newcomers and the Workshop Sponsors must commit to attend all the meetings together.

So that Newcomers and Workshop Sponsors will better understand what is expected of them, we will explain some guidelines.

For the Workshop Sponsors:

- A. Your primary obligation is to attend all four sessions in order to employ the Twelve Steps as a guide and offer encouragement and moral support. The conditions for being a Workshop Sponsor are:
 - 1. to be actively involved in your own Twelve-Step recovery,
 - 2. to be willing to listen to what the Newcomer has to say, and
 - 3. to keep everything that is shared strictly confidential.

For the Newcomers:

- A. Your primary obligation is to attend all four sessions.
- B. Although a written inventory is part of the Fourth Step, this doesn't mean you must do the writing. Your Workshop Sponsor through these sessions can help you write your inventory, or they can write it for you.
- C. We will guide you through the Twelve Steps by reading the appropriate parts of the Green Book to you. If you follow these directions, you too will experience the **“personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from sexual addiction.”**
- D. The Fourth Step consists of a simple assets and liabilities checklist that you create during the Second Session. If you view your Workshop Sponsor as a **“close-mouthed, understanding friend”**, please discuss your checklist with them. If your inventory contains specific items that you feel should be shared with a third party such as someone from the clergy, an attorney, a psychologist, or a counselor, explain this to your Workshop Sponsor. Make a commitment as to when, where, and with whom you will share those portions of your checklist. If you acknowledge to your Workshop Sponsor that you will discuss those particular inventory items with a specific person(s) by a specific date, you can proceed with the rest of the sessions.

Let's start this session by turning to the Introduction of the Green Book:

“We are sex addicts. Our addiction nearly destroyed our lives, but we found freedom through the recovery program of Sex Addicts Anonymous.”²

This is a revolutionary statement. It gives a message of hope, that recovery is possible, for any sex addict who is willing to follow this book's directions.

The Green Book authors explain that for us, there is no middle ground. We will either continue suffering due to our addiction or else find a spiritual solution through the 12 Steps:

“For all of us now in recovery, there came a time when we realized that we simply could not keep on living as before. Our denial cracked and we felt the full force of our unbearable situation. We saw that we were at the end of our rope, and that all that was left was the knot. To continue to act out seemed impossible, and yet not to act out seemed equally impossible. We knew we had to change, even if we didn't know how. Out of this despair, we came to Sex Addicts Anonymous.”³

Then they describe this spiritual program and what it takes to recover:

“In our groups, there is a collective wisdom that has grown and been handed down over the years. We learn many new solutions to old problems. Central to these are the Twelve Steps, a spiritual program of recovery. Following these steps leads to freedom from addictive sexual behaviors and to the healing of our minds, bodies, spirits, relationships, and sexuality.”⁴

Let's read this last part again for emphasis:

“Central to these are the Twelve Steps, a spiritual program of recovery. Following THESE steps leads to freedom from addictive sexual behaviors and to the healing of our minds, bodies, spirits, relationships, and sexuality.”

Now we know what we must do in order to recover from our affliction. We must undergo a life changing, spiritual transformation.

We realize this is not the answer many of you expected to find in SAA. But, please remember sex addiction is an insidious illness.

The Green Book authors once again tell us our options:

“We discovered that our addiction was a problem too big for us to solve by ourselves. Without some Power greater than ourselves to assist us, our situation is hopeless.”⁵

Next, they say that no matter what our present beliefs, there is hope for us:

“Although the steps use the word “God” to indicate this Power, SAA is not affiliated with any religion, creed, or dogma. The program offers a spiritual solution to our addiction, without requiring adherence to any specific set of beliefs or practices. The path is wide enough for everyone who wishes to walk it.”⁶

We find it amazing that a newcomer can start the SAA program without any specific beliefs or, even, without any beliefs whatsoever. All one needs is the open-mindedness and the willingness to believe that **we believe** this program works.

And let us assure you, we do believe. The Twelve Steps have changed our lives and the lives of thousands of other sex addicts. This program will change your life too if you honestly want to recover from this insidious affliction.

Let's learn more about the Green Book's spiritual solution:

“What is important is that we rely on a spiritual reality, or Higher Power, rather than on words. In essence, our shared experience of this Power is one of loving and caring. We don't have to be religious to accept this idea, or to ask this loving Power to help us in our recovery.”⁷

The Green Book authors provide us the answer on where to find this power:

“One of the aspects of coming to believe in a Higher Power is finding out what spiritual concepts make sense to us. We need to be willing to set aside old ideas and prejudices, try new solutions to old problems, and listen to the spiritual experiences and ideas of others in the fellowship. What works for others may not be an exact fit for us. But if we are patient and open-minded, we will discover an understanding of a Higher Power that is unique to us, and that we are comfortable with.”⁸

These are dramatic and for some of us revolutionary concepts. Let us summarize them. First, the Green Book authors tell us they have found a way to free us from the bondage of addiction. Next, they describe the solution as a “**Power greater than ourselves**”. Finally, they tell us how to find this Power. This Power was right instead each and every one of us.

More guidance on how to find this **Spirit of the Universe** and strengthen the connection with it comes by going through the Twelve Steps. In addition, we've noted the page numbers where each Step is located in the Green Book.

Step 1

We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior – that our lives had become unmanageable.

This step is described on pages 22-25.

Step 2

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

This step is described on pages 25-28.

Step 3

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God.

This step is described on pages 28-31.

Step 4

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

This step is described on pages 31-37.

Step 5

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

This step is described on pages 37-39.

Step 6

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

This step is described on pages 40-43.

Step 7

Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

This step is described on pages 43-45.

Step 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

This step is described on pages 45-48.

Step 9

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

This step is described on pages 48-52.

Step 10

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

This step is described on pages 52-55.

Step 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

This step is described on pages 55-58.

Step 12

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts, and to practice these principles in our lives.

This step is described on pages 58-61.

Let's read Step One again:

Step 1

We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior – that our lives had become unmanageable.

The Green Book authors talk about the physical component to this addiction:

“Many of us experience a period of intense emotional upheaval and physical discomfort when we stop our addictive sexual behaviors. We call this withdrawal. We may be assailed with powerful memories, feelings, and physical sensations. Other withdrawal symptoms can include intense mood swings, physical pain, anger, anxiety, depression, exhaustion, insomnia, nightmares, or acting-out dreams.

In withdrawal we often feel a powerful urge to resume acting out in order to stop the discomfort. We may find ourselves repeatedly confronted with temptations to sabotage our recovery, or mysteriously drawn to new sexual behaviors that we never thought would interest us. Yet we know that if we act out again we will only postpone or prolong the inevitable withdrawal.”⁹

The Green Book notes that, in addition to an abnormal physical reaction, addicts have a mental obsession with acting out:

“...many of us thought that we could act out for a while, and then go back to our lives. We would engage in one of our favorite behaviors, such as cruising the internet, only to find that we didn't stop when we said we would. Sometimes we didn't stop until we absolutely had to.”¹⁰

Our minds tell us we are O.K., even as sex addiction brings us closer and closer to more suffering. No matter how much we want to stop, sooner or later we will return to those destructive sexual behaviors.

The Green Book further emphasizes the mental obsession by stating that, no matter how strong our willpower or conviction, we cannot stop sexually acting out on our own:

“We experience [our addiction] as a compulsion...stronger than our will to resist...These compulsive desires were irresistible, persistent, and insatiable...Nor did we feel satisfied when we got our “fix”. Instead, the more we acted out sexually, the more we wanted to act out. We lost more and more of our lives to our addiction, which cost us time, money, relationships, our health, our jobs, and even our freedom. The consequences of our addiction did not make us stop or limit our acting out. The more we tried to control our behavior, the worse it got. We were unable to stop on our own...”¹¹

You see, if our minds didn't lie to us and tell us that it's O.K. to act out, we would never trigger the physical craving for more and more destructive sexual behaviors. So, we have an abnormal reaction of the body and an obsession of the mind that dooms us perhaps to death as a result of our sex addiction.

In the Green Book, they share our only hope is a life changing conversion experience:

“We have learned from hard experience that we cannot achieve and maintain abstinence if we aren't willing to change our way of life. But if we can honestly face our problems, and are willing to change, the Twelve Steps of SAA will lead to an awakening that allows us to live a new way of life according to spiritual principles. Taking these steps allows fundamental change to occur in our lives. They are the foundation of our recovery.”¹²

In other words, an addict's only hope is a spiritual awakening.

Now, let's consider a story from the Green Book which further explains the spiritual solution. We could pick any number of stories, but we selected this Green Book story Number 46 – Steps to Freedom.

Some people have difficulty relating to this particular SAA member's story because he was such a low-bottom, hopeless sex addict. Here, as elsewhere in the readings, we ask that you look for similarities rather than differences. See where you can identify with him as he continues to act out long after it has become a problem.

In the first pages, this member describes the progressive nature of his acting out. In a few short years he risks being caught, arrested, humiliated and loses his marriage. A few years later he is confronted by his ex-wife about the time when he would go in the bedroom of his stepdaughters to masturbate while they were sleeping, many of these times they were not asleep and saw everything, now they had started to speak about it.

This member has a moment of clarity. He realizes sex addiction is his master. He is defeated:

“...I said to myself, “I've got to do something. I can't just keep going on like this, trying to control it.” I had always told myself that my acting out wasn't hurting anybody, but I had to face the fact that it had hurt some people very close to me. The fact is that, when I was active in my addiction, it really didn't matter who got hurt.”¹³

But he can't stop acting out on this admission alone. With the help of a sponsor in 1997 he starts going through the 12 Steps of SAA and while going through them has a gradual conversion experience, an “**entire psychic change**”. He describes his spiritual awakening, after which his entire life changed he also shares that this program is open to anyone with the willingness to follow these simple suggestions:

“That program is the Twelve Steps of Sex Addicts Anonymous, and the story of my recovery from sex addiction is the story of the Twelve Steps. The steps are a simple, practical method for putting spiritual principles to work in my life. Anyone can work them. I don’t have to be a genius or a saint to make this program work. All it takes is the willingness to follow some simple suggestions, and any sex addict can stop acting out, lose the desire to act out, and have a happy and useful life.”¹⁴

Now, it’s time for each of us to start our personal journey toward that spiritual experience which will change our lives. Let’s see who is ready to take the First Step.

Step 1

We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior — that our lives had become unmanageable.

The Green Book authors tells us precisely what we must admit to start the recovery process:

“In our addiction we held on to the belief that we were in control of our sexual behavior and could successfully manage our lives. This kept many of us from seeing that we even had a problem. We told ourselves that if we had tried harder, we could have stopped. But our experience has shown otherwise. No matter how many promises or resolutions we made, no matter how strong our efforts and our determination, the behaviors eventually returned, along with their painful consequences. Only when we admit our powerlessness over these behaviors, and our inability to manage our own lives, are we able to begin walking a path of recovery.”¹⁵

In order to smash the delusion that we’re not sexually addicted, we will ask each of you to answer a simple question, “Are you ready to concede to your innermost self that you are powerless over your sexual addiction and that your life had become unmanageable?” In other words, “Are you a sex addict?” and “Had your life become unmanageable?” Note that Step One does not necessarily say that our life is currently unmanageable but that it had become unmanageable due to our addictive sexual behavior. All that is required is a yes or no answer, which we will get to in one minute.

If you’re not convinced you are a sex addict or that your life is unmanageable, please let us know. Your Workshop Sponsor is willing to spend time with you today to discuss your reservations. We want to give you every opportunity to comprehend the devastating consequences of this terrible affliction.

Maybe you’re not a sex addict. Maybe you’re here by mistake. We just want you to know we’d rather be inside the fellowship of SAA by mistake, than outside the fellowship, acting out and dying by mistake. It’s something to think about.

O.K., for those who are ready, let’s proceed. This is the First Step question:

Do you concede to your innermost self you are a sex addict, and that due to your acting out your life had become unmanageable?

Please answer during the next few minutes one at a time, yes or no.

Thank you.

Those of you who have answered yes to this question have completed Step One; let's give ourselves a big round of applause. Those who did not will have some time after this session to discuss this with your Workshop Sponsor and hopefully take this step with them.

Step 2

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

The Green Book states:

“In the first Step we admitted that our addiction was going to destroy us if we did not stop and that we could not stop on our own... In the Second Step we are presented with the possibility that this Power can restore us to a basic sanity and well-being.”¹⁶

The Green Book continues saying:

“Step Two... at the same time implies that in our addiction we were insane. Our insanity manifested in many ways. We would often put our addiction first and everything else second. We may have placed ourselves in dangerous situations or taken terrible risks. And the more we denied our addiction and its consequences, the less we were in touch with reality.”¹⁷

So how do we find this Power greater than ourselves that can restore us to sanity?

The Green Book explains:

“One of the aspects of coming to believe in a Higher Power is finding out what spiritual concepts make sense to us. We need to be willing to set aside old ideas and prejudices, try new solutions to old problems, and listen to the spiritual experiences and ideas of others in the fellowship. What works for others may not be an exact fit for us. But if we are patient and open-minded, we will discover an understanding of a Higher Power that is unique to us, and that we are comfortable with. Ultimately, the specifics of our belief are not as important as faith. We can build our spirituality on the faith that our Higher Power can relieve us of our addiction.”¹⁸

We have found helpful to follow three simple rules “**trust in God, clean house**” and “**help others**”. If we follow these guidelines, we will receive the ultimate reward—a spiritual awakening “that will free us from the bondage of addiction”.

So how do we begin to trust God, or a “Power greater than ourselves”?

The Green Book notes:

“Many of us didn’t believe in God, or were uncertain as to what spiritual beliefs we were willing to accept, if any...We may be so used to self-reliance as the only way of functioning in the world that we resist the notion of any Power greater than ourselves.”¹⁹

Although these obstacles may seem insurmountable, fortunately they aren’t.

As the Green Book adds:

“To work this step, we only need to be open-minded enough to try something new. For most of us, *coming to believe* is a gradual process. We don’t need to believe in any particular concept of a Higher Power in order to begin. We learn from others what works and doesn’t work for them. We listen, and we try out new approaches...”²⁰

Once again, we need to make a decision. We must decide if we believe in a “**God of our understanding**”, a “**Higher Power**” that could restore us to sanity.

The Green Book authors write:

“The key to Step Two is not just believing in a Higher Power, but believing that this Power can and will restore us to sanity.”²¹

Our Higher power will not be cold or distant but rather present in our lives.

Sometimes we have to take our lives right to the brink of disaster before we are willing to acknowledge the presence of a Higher Power. But there is hope even for the most stubborn of us.

The Green Book offers this hope when it says:

“If we find it difficult to believe, we can act “as if” we believe. The willingness to act “as if” helps us to make a commitment to recovery, despite any doubts we may have. By committing to recovery, we give ourselves time to let the program work in our lives, with our understanding growing gradually along with us. We find that “acting as if” is more than just wishful thinking. In the process, we discover that a willingness to accept new ways of behavior leads to a clearer understanding of who we are and how spiritual principles work.”²²

Let's see who is ready to proceed. This is the Second Step question:

“Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself that can and will restore me to sanity?”

Please answer during the next few minutes one at a time, yes or no.

Thank you.

Those of you who answered yes to this question have completed Step Two; let's give ourselves a big round of applause. Those who did not will have some time after this session to discuss this with your Workshop Sponsor and hopefully take this step with them.

Now for those who are ready, let's look at Step Three.

Step 3

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.

If we've taken Step Two, we are convinced that a **“Power greater than ourselves”** can restore us to sanity. Now, we need to make a decision to allow this Power to work. In other words, we have to get out of the way and let God direct our lives.

The Green Book authors discuss self-will and God's will. They explain that we need to loosen the grip on our old destructive patterns:

“We loosen the grip on our old destructive patterns, perhaps not knowing yet what will replace them, but in the faith that something better will be revealed. When we surrender our old way of living to a Power greater than ourselves, we don't always know where we're going, but we can be sure that it will be better than where we were.”²³

The authors later declare that it is this turning over is like losing a familiar friend:

“With surrender, we say goodbye to our old way of life and prepare to make a transition to the new. Letting go of our addiction can be like losing a familiar friend. For most of our lives, our addiction was there to comfort us and distract us from our problems. Facing life without acting out involves feelings of grief and loss. But it can be done, through faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and in the company of others who walk the same path.”²⁴

Then the authors tell us what we must do in order to turn over our will:

“How can we accomplish this turning over? We may be afraid of taking this step. It may even seem impossible to surrender control and allow a caring Higher Power to direct our

lives. But it is helpful to remember that all we are doing is making a decision to turn our will and lives over. At this point in our program, we are simply willing to move forward. We decide to make a commitment to recovery, and to our spiritual growth. For most of us, the actual turning over of our will and lives to the care of God will take place gradually, through working the remaining nine steps.”²⁵

So, now we know our place in the Universe. Contrary to what we may have previously thought, the whole world does not revolve around us.

The Green Book describes the Third Step decision:

“We turn our will and our lives over to the care of God because our self-directed thoughts and actions have so often lead us to acting out, negative consequences, and despair. In Step Three, we let a Power greater than ourselves guide our daily decisions, opening ourselves to the possibility that we may not know what is best for us, and letting go of the belief in our own power to manage our lives...”²⁶

Moreover, the Green Book adds:

“The Third Step invites us to turn our will and lives over to the care of God, not the control of God. We are not abandoning ourselves to the direction of some powerful taskmaster forcing us to do things that are not of our own choosing. Instead, we become open to making new choices for ourselves in the light of a Higher Power’s transforming love and care...”²⁷

In short, the Green Book explains the meaning of the Third Step decision:

“To make the Third Step decision is to surrender. We give up the belief that our intellect, our knowledge, our judgment, and our will could successfully guide our lives. We accept that the control we thought we had over our lives was an illusion. This profound surrender of old beliefs, habits, and behaviors is something we learn to renew every day. We reaffirm our decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of the God of our understanding, not seeking an unattainable perfection, but acknowledging and affirming the progress we make in recovery.”²⁸

It is decision time once again, the authors of the Green Book don’t offer a prayer, many of us are familiar with the Third Step Prayer of AA, here we offer a version from a member of our fellowship that incorporates the principles of the Third Step:

“God, I surrender to You today with all my heart and soul. I hold nothing back. I surrender my entire life to You, including my understanding of what my life should be. Direct my life as you would have it, not according to my will, but to yours.”²⁹

We would like all of you who are ready to take the Third Step to read the prayer along with us a second time.

Let's read this Third Step Prayer together.

According to the Green Book, we have completed Step Three.

Let's give ourselves a big round of applause.

All three Steps involve a commitment to being open to new possibilities, we may find that steps Two and Three gradually become a greater foundation in our lives as time passes. But we have taken each of these steps in the last hour. This is a remarkable achievement. Congratulations.

During the next session, we will provide you guidelines for taking the Fourth and Fifth Steps. You will fill out a Fourth Step inventory and arrange to share it with others between the second and the third session.

If you did not complete the first 3 Steps, we'll have some time to review them and discuss your reservations with your Workshop Sponsor and hopefully complete all 3 of them. If between this session and the next you were unable to complete all 3 Steps, please keep coming back. You may hear something that will motivate you to complete them in the near future.

Are there any questions?

Let's close the session with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Session 2 (Steps 4 and 5)

WELCOME to session two of the Basic Recovery Workshop. Together, we are taking the Twelve Steps based on the directions found in the Green Book.

Our names are _____ and _____, and we are members of Sex Addicts Anonymous. We are grateful to all of you for letting us be of service and facilitate these sessions, thus allowing us to grow in the “fellowship of the Spirit”.

Let’s open the session with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

During this session, we will guide you through the inventory process described in the Fourth and Fifth Steps.

Are there any Newcomers here without their Workshop Sponsor? If so, please raise your hand. We will assign a Workshop Sponsor to each of you who needs one.

[Ask for volunteers to be Workshop Sponsor for those who raised their hands.]

Thank you.

Even though we spent considerable time on the first three Steps, we have only made a series of decisions. Now we will take specific actions that will carry us the rest of the way to God as you understand God.

Step Four asks us to let go of our shame, that prevents us from seeing ourselves as we are. It is the beginning of acceptance. Step Five asks us to let go of fear that prevents us from receiving forgiveness and faith.

Now let’s read Step Four.

Step 4

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

The Green Book authors state:

“In taking the Fourth Step, we begin to know ourselves for who we really are. Building on the foundation of the first three steps, we take stock of the feelings and patterns that have shaped our lives. We come to realize that our addiction is more than just unmanageable sexual activities; it includes an entire system of underlying thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. If we neglect this inventory, we risk being stuck in our old habits and mistaken beliefs, and our unexamined defects of character will eventually lead us to relapse.”³⁰

They tell us we need to take the Fourth Step after we complete the Third Step to avoid risking a relapse. We must get rid of those things which have blocked us from the spiritual solution to our difficulties.

So, now we will establish a direct line of communication with God by eliminating those aspects of our personalities that have kept us in the dark. The Green Book authors say that acting out is but a symptom.

The Green Book suggests that we examine our character liabilities by taking a written inventory:

“The Fourth Step inventory is a written inventory. If we merely say it aloud or think about it, it is too easy to miss or ignore important things. All inventories have to be recorded in some way in order to be accurate. Imagine trying to take inventory of all the merchandise in a store without writing anything down. In the same way, our inventory needs to be documented in order to be useful. The written inventory serves as a snapshot of the current state of our moral being and allows us to get an accurate, realistic perspective on ourselves, perhaps for the very first time.”³¹

So, we will conduct the equivalent of a commercial inventory on our lives to highlight our assets and liabilities to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

Before we get into the details on how to complete this Step, we want to emphasize something. There is no right or wrong way to do this inventory.

The Green Book authors say:

“There is no single format that is used by all members in their inventories. We work closely with our sponsor to discover what kind of writing we need to do and what form of inventory is most effective for us. The common element is that we write about a number of aspects of our lives that, when put together, give us an honest picture of ourselves, including our shortcomings.”³²

The Green Book says the following about the thoroughness inventories, like the one we are going to take today:

“We need to remember that our Fourth Step is an inventory, not the inventory. We may always return to our inventory when we need to. We may have only been ready to face certain truths about ourselves when we first worked the step. We may work a Fourth Step again when we have new challenges to face or when we need to examine ourselves more closely. There is no one right inventory, and there are no perfect inventories.”³³

The Green Book ask us to start examining our sexual harms:

“Examining our sexual conduct is an important aspect of our inventory. While in our First Step we examined the patterns of our sexual behavior and disclosed specific instances, here we explore more deeply our sexual history and look at every instance in which our sexual behavior directly or indirectly harmed others or ourselves. We look at whom we hurt, what we did specifically to hurt them, and why we did it. In the process, we may uncover the secret agendas, fantasies, beliefs, and rationalizations contributing to our behavior.”³⁴

The Green Book then continues by providing examples of the kind of sexual harms we could have engaged on:

“While violating others sexually is an obvious example of a harm done, we also acknowledge that using people for our sexual exploits, violating trust, committing infidelity, lying and covering up our behaviors, manipulating others covertly or overtly, and taking advantage of others by using power or authority are other ways we may have caused harm. We may also examine our traumatic sexual experiences or sexually abusive relationships and their effects on ourselves and others. Clarity, honesty, and self-disclosure are essential as we explore each instance. We take full and unequivocal responsibility for what we’ve done. Even if we were co-partners in sexual misdeeds, in working Step Four we focus only on our part.”³⁵

The authors then finish by asking us to reveal what aspects of our character were linked to those harms.

“We look honestly at the defects that drove our behavior, such as selfishness, desire for control, an attitude of entitlement, or feelings of inferiority or superiority.”³⁶

Now, let’s begin the Fourth Step by listing our sexual harms. Because of the limited time in this session, we ask you list below the names of up to three people you harmed the most by acting out along with a brief description of the harm done as well as the character defects linked to those harms. This way, you and your Workshop Sponsor can begin discussing your inventory immediately after this session.

[Take a few minutes so everyone can work on their sexual harms.]

1) Name: _____

Harm: _____

Character defects: (circle those that apply): dishonesty - selfishness - pessimism - desire for control - attitude of entitlement - feeling of inferiority - feeling of superiority - resentment - fear

Other character defects: _____

2) **Name:** _____

Harm: _____

Character defects: (circle those that apply): dishonesty - selfishness - pessimism - desire for control - attitude of entitlement - feeling of inferiority - feeling of superiority - resentment - fear

Other character defects: _____

3) **Name:** _____

Harm: _____

Character defects: (circle those that apply): dishonesty - selfishness - pessimism - desire for control - attitude of entitlement - feeling of inferiority - feeling of superiority - resentment - fear

Other character defects: _____

The authors continue with a list of shortcomings we need to eliminate. They ask us to now examine our resentments:

“We also inventory our resentments.”³⁷

“In our inventory we list the people and situations that have hurt us, citing specific instances. We list what resentments we hold against people, and why... Some of us have also listed resentments against society or certain institutions.”³⁸

The authors emphasize that our resentments keep us separated from God. We must eliminate them if we are to have a spiritual awakening:

“For sex addicts, resentment is one of the most stubborn obstacles to our spiritual growth.”³⁹

Then the authors instruct us to look at our part in each situation in order to see where we may be at fault:

“We then go back over the list of resentments, looking at each incident, and ask ourselves what role we played in the situation. We must take responsibility for our part, however small...When looking at the actions of others, for instance, we need to ask ourselves, “What is it about their actions that may have been a response to something I said or did?”. ”⁴⁰

“When we review our responsibility in conflicts, we see the pattern of our character defects emerge. Character defects are flaws in our moral nature that prevent us from aligning ourselves with God’s will; they are expressions of our willfulness. These defects include dishonesty, selfishness, self-centeredness, lack of humility, grandiosity, pessimism, the desire to control everything around us, or any other shortcoming that we see coming up again and again in our relationships with others.”⁴¹

To see where we were at fault in the incidents on our checklist can be difficult but also revealing and healing. To stop blaming others and take responsibility for our actions can result in a revolutionary change in our way of living and thinking.

Let’s look at the last sentence again. It reads,

“These defects include dishonesty, selfishness, self-centeredness, lack of humility, grandiosity, pessimism, the desire to control everything around us, or any other shortcoming that we see coming up again and again in our relationships with others.”⁴²

These behaviors are based on self-will. We need to know if we’re moving toward the **Realm of the Spirit** or are we continuing to sink into that bitter morass of self-pity. As the Green Book emphasizes, it is our character defects that keeps us blocked from God and prevents us from finding the spiritual solution to sex addiction.

If we don’t deal with our resentments, the future will be just a repeat of the past. Every time we remember an old hurt, the old pain returns, and we feel it again and again. In the past we may have acted out sexually to numb this pain, but now we will take the actions necessary to relieve this pain.

The first thing we do is discuss our resentments with our Workshop Sponsors. Healing starts with talking about the hurt. But, the healing is not complete until we forgive those who have offended us. We overcome resentment with forgiveness. We forgive by seeing the source of our pain in a new light. We see the person as a sick individual who needs our prayers, not our anger. Whether it is a person who is still in our lives, someone deceased, someone we may never see again, or ourselves, the process is the same.

Now, continue our Fourth Step by listing our Resentments. Because of the limited time in this session, we ask you list the names of up to three people and/or institutions you feel most resentful towards, a brief description of the resentment as well as the part you played, however small, along with the character defects linked to the part you played.

We deal with the resentments that trouble us most right now. In the weeks and months ahead, we will conduct additional inventories to take care of what is bothers us then. If we address our wreckage of the past now, our subsequent inventories should contain new names and new difficulties; not the same old names again.

[Take a few minutes so everyone can work on their resentment lists.]

1) Name: _____

Resentment: _____

Part I Played: _____

Character defects: (circle those that apply): dishonesty - selfishness - pessimism - desire for control - attitude of entitlement - feeling of inferiority - feeling of superiority - fear

Other character defects: _____

2) Name: _____

Resentment: _____

Part I Played: _____

Character defects: (circle those that apply): dishonesty - selfishness - pessimism - desire for control - attitude of entitlement - feeling of inferiority - feeling of superiority - fear

Other character defects: _____

3) Name: _____

Resentment: _____

Part I Played: _____

Character defects: (circle those that apply): dishonesty - selfishness - pessimism - desire for control - attitude of entitlement - feeling of inferiority - feeling of superiority - fear

Other character defects: _____

Next the Green Book authors ask us to look at our fears. They write:

“In the case of fear, we may write about times in which we risked our lives, health, careers, or relationships, while denying that we were in danger. We can list the ways in which we have been handicapped by our fears: how fear motivated actions that we later regretted, how it prevented us from achieving the things we desired, or how the fear of intimacy and commitment contributed to our loneliness. Many of us have found that fear was a pervasive influence throughout our lives, profoundly affecting our beliefs, our relationships, and our self-worth.”⁴³

The Green Book tell us that we will lose our fears if we have faith in the “**Power of God**”:

“My ego-centered life is based on fear and scarcity, but a God-centered life is based on love and abundance. I have come to believe that everything happens for some reason, even if I can’t figure it out at the time. In turning my will and life over to the wisdom and care of this Higher Power, I am assuming that the universe knows what it’s doing. I have faith that if I turn things over to God, everything will work out the way it’s supposed to without my having to “make” things happen.”⁴⁴

The authors add what we should do when they refer to fears:

“In each case we search for the defects of character revealed by our emotional unmanageability”⁴⁵

Now, let’s continue with the Fourth Step listing our Fears, we ask you to list up to three fears starting with the most important ones. Listen to who or what they are afraid of and then if there were defects of character to the root of in these fears or if due to these fears there were character flaws that arose.

[Take a few minutes so everyone can work on their Fear lists.]

1) Fear: _____

Character defects: (circle those that apply): dishonesty - selfishness - pessimism - desire for control - attitude of entitlement - feeling of inferiority - feeling of superiority - resentment

Other character defects: _____

2) Fear: _____

Character defects: (circle those that apply): dishonesty - selfishness - pessimism - desire for control - attitude of entitlement - feeling of inferiority - feeling of superiority - resentment

Other character defects: _____

3) Fear: _____

Character defects: (circle those that apply): dishonesty - selfishness - pessimism - desire for control - attitude of entitlement - feeling of inferiority - feeling of superiority - resentment

Other character defects: _____

So much for the liabilities side of the ledger. Now, what about the assets?

The Green Book indicates that a moral inventory wouldn't be complete without some acknowledgment of our positive aspects. We ask that you add on the list below any other character defect you identified on the inventory as well as the asset and then complete the table by adding the number of times each of these character defects showed up on your inventories.

N°	Character Defect	Character Asset
	Resentment	Forgiveness
	Fear	Trust / Faith
	Dishonesty	Honesty
	Selfishness	Unselfishness
	Pessimism	Optimism
	Desire for control	Letting Go
	Attitude of entitlement	Gratitude
	Feeling of inferiority	Healthy Pride
	Feeling of superiority	Humility

We have now looked at both sides of our inventory, we see it consists of a list of defects to watch for and a list of assets to strive for.

Remember that it is not necessary to list every resentment, or selfish act, or each person they have ever lied to in order for the inventory to be thorough.

We look at assets as well as liabilities because many of us have lost much of our self-esteem as the result of our sex addiction. Even though we've done some very foolish and destructive things while acting out, we will never have to repeat these actions, provided we are willing to admit our faults and correct them. If we are genuinely sorry, God has already forgiven us. Now, it is time to forgive ourselves.

We have completed discussing Step Four, but before we end this session, we need to discuss one more detail—the person with whom we share our inventory.

Step 5

Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

The Green Book explains the key to this Step:

“Each step of the program is a leap of faith that moves us forward in our recovery. After completing our moral inventory, we are challenged in Step Five to take another leap. We now need to admit the whole truth we have discovered to God, to ourselves, and to another person. Working the Fifth Step helps relieve us of the burden of our secrets, break through our isolation, and face ourselves honestly in a way we cannot do alone. With the Fifth Step, we come out into the open.”⁴⁶

The Green Book adds:

“Our belief that we were isolated, estranged from the care of a loving God, had kept us in fear. Now, breaking free of secrecy, we admit our wrongs in the light of our relationship with the God of our understanding. If we trust, we will be given the power to acknowledge our shortcomings. Admitting our wrongs to God opens the door to change within ourselves. We have found that God will help us find the courage and honesty we need in order to work this step.”⁴⁷

Therefore, we must discuss our inventories with someone else.

We share our inventories because we are great at self-deception. Aren't we the ones who used to say we didn't have a problem with our sexual acting out? Didn't we repeatedly tell ourselves that we were doing fine as we sank ever deeper into our destructive sexual behavior?

Since we are not good judges of character, especially our own, we confide in someone else. Only another person can see us as we really are.

That person can be your Workshop Sponsor through these sessions, but it doesn't have to be. The Green Book provides us other options.

“We pick someone we trust to hear our inventory. Most of us share our Fifth Step with our sponsor. Some of us choose a friend in the program, a therapist, a spiritual advisor, or another wise confidant with whom we feel safe. It is best to take this step with the help of a person who has worked this step in his or her own recovery and who already knows and accepts us unconditionally.”⁴⁸

Therefore, you can share your inventory with a number of people.

As the Green Book notes, however:

“We do not take the Fifth Step with our partners, parents, or families. This is not the time for selfish confessions. We need time in the program, and the help of experienced members, before we can judge what to reveal to our families or those closest to us.”⁴⁹

For those who are still uncertain who that person should be, have your Workshop Sponsor help you decide.

Confidentiality is crucial. Some of the people are legally bound to keep a secret such religious, medical, and mental health professionals, and attorneys.

This legal protection is not absolute, there are exceptions, and it doesn't include your Workshop Sponsor. Therefore, both the Newcomer and the Workshop Sponsors must be careful about what is discussed during a Fifth Step.

If you feel uncomfortable discussing some parts of your checklist with your Workshop Sponsor after we finish this session, we ask only that you commit to your Workshop Sponsor when, where, and with whom you will share those parts of your inventory. For Example: "I'm uncomfortable talking with you about my brother, I will tell my therapist about it before Thursday". Make sure you write this on the sheet.

If you make this commitment, you can continue the remaining sessions with us.

Once we admit our shortcomings, our lives will change.

The Green Book tells us:

"When we finish Step Five, it may feel as though a great burden has been lifted from our shoulders. Many of us feel a sense of wholeness and integrity for the very first time. We have acknowledged and taken responsibility for the whole of our being, to ourselves, our fellow addict, and our Higher Power. The acceptance we receive is a profound spiritual experience."⁵⁰

We are now well on our way towards forgiveness, faith and sexual sobriety.

Please, let the God of your understanding guide you through the inventory process. If you do, you'll find Steps Four and Five simple and straightforward.

Before we move to the next session you we will work with the Workshop Sponsor Step 5. As we have noted, there is no right or wrong way to do the Fourth and Fifth Steps. Just do them.

Are there any questions?

Let's close the session with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Session 3 (Steps 6, 7, 8, and 9)

WELCOME to session three of the Basic Recovery Workshop. Together, we're taking the Twelve Steps as described in the SAA Green Book. Our objective is to find a God of our understanding who will free us from the deadly affliction of sex addiction.

Our names are _____ and _____, and we are members of SAA. We're here to guide you in your journey toward a spiritual solution to your addictive sexual behavior.

Let's open the session with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

So far, we've taken steps One through Five.

Are there any Newcomers here without their Workshop Sponsor? If so, please raise your hand. We will assign a Workshop Sponsor to each of you who needs one.

[Ask for volunteers to be Workshop Sponsor for those who raised their hands.]

Thank you.

Let's see how many are still on track. Will Newcomers who have completed their Fourth Step inventories and have shared them with another person, please raise your hands with your Workshop Sponsor.

We congratulate you for having the honesty, open mindedness, and willingness to do what is necessary to recover from sex addiction; let's give ourselves another round of applause. You are well on your way to that promised spiritual awakening.

As we said in Session Two, it doesn't matter who did the writing, just as long as you and your Workshop Sponsor came up with a list of character defects and a list of people to whom you need to make amends. You'll turn over your shortcomings to your Higher Power in Steps Six and Seven and you'll identify and make amends to those you've harmed in Steps Eight and Nine.

If you haven't finished or shared your inventory, please stay. You may hear something that will motivate you to complete Steps Four and Five in the near future. But remember that you have to do the work in order to receive the benefits we'll discuss later.

We now enter the phase of the program where more and more actions are required. These actions produce results. Many of these results are in the form of promises which, as our lives change, become an integral part of our spiritual being.

If our lives didn't improve, why would we want to stay sober? If all we had to look forward to was restlessness, irritability, and discontentment, why do the work? SAA offers so much more—a new way of living—far more beautiful than anything we could ever imagine. That's why we take the Steps.

Let's proceed to Step Six.

Step 6

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step Six asks us to become even more willing than before to let the God of our understanding guide our lives. Although it's not complicated, it may not be easy.

The Green Book states:

“Wanting our lives to change is not the same as being actually ready for change. The negative patterns uncovered in our inventory represent a lifetime of ingrained beliefs, attitudes, and habits of behavior...imagining life without them may seem almost impossible.”⁵¹

“Much of our resistance to change is based in fear...”⁵²

Although the removal of our character defects may seem difficult and even scary, we must be open to it if we want to stay sober and happy.

The Green Book then continues:

“Our problems did not begin with our sex addiction, nor do they end when we get into recovery...our malady has roots that run deeper than just our acting out behaviors. It requires the willingness to change fundamentally, to be free of the failings that continue to create serious problems in our lives.”⁵³

Moreover, Step Six implies that we cannot banish these character defects by using our own willpower.

As the Green Book notes:

“We may feel as powerless over our defects as we did over our addictive sexual behaviors...Many of us had tried to purge ourselves of our worst traits, and our efforts failed, just as our attempts to be free of our addiction failed.”⁵⁴

Instead of relying on self-will, Step Six asks us to deepen our Step Three decision to let God's care guide our lives. In Step Six, we further let God guide our lives by now becoming entirely willing to have God remove all of these defects of character.

In Step Six, the Green Book emphasizes that becoming willing is all we need to do:

“We wondered how God could remove our character defects. But we need not concern ourselves with this in order to work Step Six. All we have to do is become willing, and leave the rest to our Higher Power.”⁵⁵

So, it is a decision time once again.

In Step Five, we identified our character defects using the assets and liabilities checklist from session two. In Step Six, we prepare to turn these character defects over to God.

The authors of the Green Book explain it is a gradual process when they say:

“We do not need to be willing to have all of our defects removed at once. We can concentrate on being ready to have one or two debilitating character traits removed first. And just as we stop acting out one day at a time, we can allow ourselves to be ready for changes in our character one day at a time.”⁵⁶

Let’s start with a moment of silence so we can ask God for the willingness to have our Higher Power remove all of the shortcomings we’ve identified in our inventories.

[Two minutes of silence.]

For those who have completed the Fifth Step, this is the Sixth Step question:

“Are you now ready to have God remove from you all of your defects of character?”

Please answer during the next few minutes one at a time, yes or no.

Thank you.

Those of you who answered yes have completed Step Six and are ready to proceed to Step Seven. Let’s give ourselves one more big round of applause.

Step 7

Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

Step Seven begins with the word ‘humbly’. Let’s not confuse humility with humiliation.

The Green Book explains what it means to ‘asking humbly’:

“It means admitting that we are not wholly strong and self-sufficient. It means that we are not too proud or ashamed to believe that we can be helped.”⁵⁷

The Seventh Step requires the humility that was obtained thanks to the work on the previous steps, it requires being able to be vulnerable and admitting that we need help and the “Green Paper” confirms this when it says:

“Humility is a result of the self-honesty we have gained through working the preceding steps. It comes from a realistic view of ourselves, a knowledge of both our strengths and limitations. We recognize that our shortcomings are not unique, and that we are not better or worse than anyone else. When we live with this knowledge, we do not expect perfection from ourselves or others... Humility means being teachable, vulnerable, and open.”⁵⁸

The Green Book states:

“The power of this step is in the asking, not in the result. Asking expresses a deepening surrender on our part. The Seventh Step does not guarantee, or even predict, an outcome. We have found that God’s will for us is usually different, and ultimately greater, than our expectations.”⁵⁹

Here is something the authors say we should expect:

“Change occurs in God’s time, not ours...We need patience to work the Seventh Step, and trust that our Higher Power can help us.”⁶⁰

The Green Book adds:

“Many of us work this step through prayer.”⁶¹

A fellow from SAA offers an example of such a prayer to ask God to remove his shortcomings:

“God, I ask that you remove from me all the shortcomings I am ready to let go today. Help me align my will to yours so that I can help others.”⁶²

We ask each of you who is ready to take Step Seven to read the prayer along with us again.

We have completed Step Seven; let’s give ourselves another round of applause

Now, it is time to clear away the wreckage of our past by making amends.

When we make amends to those we have harmed and forgive those who have harmed us, we reduce the blocks that have separated us from our Higher Power and from our fellows.

Keeping in mind that God will be the One who will guide us in the task that we have in front of us and will provide us with the necessary strengths to perform it, we will now move on to the Eighth Step.

Step 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

The Green Book notes:

“With the Eight Step, we begin to take responsibility for the harm we inflicted on others when we acted on our character defects. Most of us know that we caused harm in one way or another, but in the past we chose to feel guilty without doing anything about it.”⁶³

Step 8 begins with the words, “**Made a list**”. Do we need to make this list? Actually, no! We made our list as part of our Fourth Step. The Green Book authors confirm this:

“We start by writing a list of all the persons we have harmed. Our Fourth Step inventory can be very helpful in making this list. Going back over our inventory, we will see the names of many people we resented, feared, neglected, or harmed with our sexual acting out. Most of these names will go on our Eighth Step list. Paying attention to the shortcomings outlined in our Fourth Step may also trigger memories of the harm we have caused to other people over the years because of these defects.”⁶⁴

This is why we hold onto our Fourth Step inventory. It contains our Eighth Step amends list.

For those Newcomers who made an amends list as part of your Fourth Step inventory, congratulations. You have completed Step Eight.

Let’s move on to Step Nine.

Step 9

Made direct amends to such people, wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

The Green Book explains:

“In taking the Ninth Step, we act on the knowledge that what we do really matters—that our actions have consequences in the world, for good or ill. The damage we did in our addiction is cleared away not only by honestly admitting what we have done, but by committing to setting things right. Reaching out to others to acknowledge and heal the wrongs of the past brings us freedom and serenity in the present. We call this process making *direct amends*. In Step Nine we make our best effort to contact the people we have harmed, admit the wrongs we have done them, express our remorse, and offer some kind of reparation. Most importantly, we change how we behave today. We do our utmost not to repeat the behavior that caused harm in the past, and we communicate this resolve to those we’ve hurt.”⁶⁵

The Green Book adds:

“Throughout this process, we are mindful of our motives in making amends...We want to be sure that we are not using the amends process as an excuse to re-engage with people who prefer to not have contact with us...or to burden others with detailed confessions in order to relieve ourselves of our guilt.”⁶⁶

The Green Book authors suggest we ask others for help before we make some of our more difficult amends. We need direction, preferably from someone who understands the inventory and restitution process. We must make sure we do not create further harm as we clean up our side of the street.

The authors of the Green Book write:

“We need to exercise good judgment here. We seek the counsel of our sponsor and other members who have experience working this step. Rather than rushing into premature amends, we take the time to get clear about exactly what we are making amends for and what harm we think we caused in each situation. We also take time to clarify our emotions before we proceed. An attitude of humility and sincere regret for the harms we have done will carry us far. For each amends, we also decide whether it is appropriate to make contact with that person, how much we reveal to the person, and whether we put ourselves at risk when we make amends.”⁶⁷

So, what are some of the ways that we can make things right?

The Green Book suggests:

“If we took money or property, we do our best to replace it. If our behavior has caused psychological harm, we can offer to pay for therapy. If we were distant and emotionally neglectful, we can make ourselves available and emotionally present...It is often helpful to ask the people that we have harmed what they think that we should do to make things right.”⁶⁸

The Green Book authors again instruct us to ask God for guidance. This reliance upon God is essential, if we are to outgrow the fears separating us from God:

“Many of us find ourselves worrying about the reactions of those to whom we make amends, hesitating to proceed with this step because of our fear. We can rely on our Higher Power to be with us throughout this process and to grant us the courage we need to move forward.”⁶⁹

Keep in mind that courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is facing the fear and walking through it.

What can we do in situations where we cannot or should not make amends directly?

The Green Book suggests:

“We may, for instance, donate time or money to an appropriate charity or institution. It may be best to make our donations anonymously, in the spirit of our newfound humility.”⁷⁰

Regarding people we can't reach, the Green Book adds:

“...we can still write letters to them, containing everything we would have said to them if (we could)...and then read these letters to our sponsor. We can remember such people in our prayers and allow their memory to motivate us in our new way of life. In all cases where we cannot, for whatever reason, make direct amends, we grieve our losses, and then use our experience to make better choices in the future.”⁷¹

Finally, the Green Book notes that:

“In the long run, the most effective amends we can make to others and to ourselves is in our commitment to recovery. Some call this making “living amends.” We find we can redress the wrongs of the past by not hurting those we have harmed, or anyone else, in the same way again.”⁷²

The Green Book authors conclude the Ninth Step with another list of benefits. They tell us precisely what is going to happen once we commence to clear away the wreckage of our past. We are told that anyone who works the program will have these benefits come true. These are Our Promises:

“We become accountable for our behavior. Our relationships improve, both with those we have harmed in the past and with new people in our lives. We see that we are becoming better people, and we begin to experience a new sense of self-worth. We feel free to live in the present and enjoy our lives, no longer having to carry a load of despair, resentment, and fear.

Working Step Nine brings us many gifts: true empathy for those we have harmed, compassion, self-respect, and respect for the humanity of others. God willing, we may experience the forgiveness of those we have harmed. If we have been diligent in our amends, we will certainly grow in self-forgiveness too. As a result of accepting responsibility for the harm we have done, even to those who may have hurt us, we glimpse new possibilities for loving and forgiving others. Our faith in our Higher Power increases when we realize that we've squarely faced the wrongs in our past, made amends for them, and received the gift of a better future. The process that began in the Fourth Step, and culminated in the Ninth, now becomes a part of our lives, a daily stance, a practice that will keep us sexually sober and spiritually connected.”⁷³

What a message of hope! It is almost beyond comprehension that all of these wonderful events will occur if we just make amends to those whom we have harmed. But, they will happen—that's a guarantee.

This concludes our discussion of Step Nine. For Newcomers, part of your assignment for the next session is to start your amends list. We suggest you pick up your Fourth Step inventory to identify the names you are going to include in your Eighth Step. As for the Ninth Step we suggest that before the next session you write an honest letter as to what you would say to someone you have hurt and practice by reading it to your Workshop Sponsor. We also suggest you start making living amends to yourself and others by changing your ways and living in your character assets. **Direct amends should not be taken lightly or done prematurely; we encourage you review this with a sponsor with whom you have gone through the Steps in more depth.**

In our next session, we will take Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve.

Are there any questions

Let's close the session with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Session 4 (Steps 10, 11, and 12)

And now **WELCOME** to the fourth of the one-hour SAA Basic Recovery Workshop sessions. Together, we're taking the last steps as described in the Green Book. This is the payoff—to recover from the seemingly hopeless state of mind and body known as sex addiction. By completing the Twelve Steps of S.A.A., you will experience the spiritual awakening that will change your life forever.

Our names are _____ and _____ and we are members of SAA. It is a pleasure to be a part of this life-changing process—to watch people grow spiritually right before our eyes.

Let's open the session with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Are any Newcomers here without their Workshop Sponsor? If so, please raise your hand. We will assign a Workshop Sponsor to each of you. [Ask for volunteers to be Workshop Sponsor for those who raised their hands.]

Thank you.

Let's see who's ready to continue. Will all who completed Steps One through Eight and are working on their Ninth Step amends, please raise your hands.

Congratulations. You are in the process of experiencing the personality change **sufficient to recover from sex addiction**.

We are so happy you have chosen to live, when so many sex addicts would rather die than accept the spiritual solution to sex addiction.

You have chosen to let God direct your lives. Let's see what we must do in order to maintain and expand this new God consciousness. Basically, we need to live the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Steps every day.

Let's start with Step Ten.

Step 10

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

In Steps One through Three, we made the decisions that put us on the spiritual path. In Steps Four through Nine, we took the actions necessary to remove those things which had separated us from God, spiritually **"cleaning our house"**. As the Green Book notes:

"In taking the Tenth Step, we commit to keeping our house in order, whether old failings reappear or new ones arise, as they inevitably will."⁷⁴

The Green Book offers tips on working Step 10:

“Some of us choose to put our Tenth Step inventories in writing... writing can give us a sense of clarity... (and) help us break through the rationalizations that spring from our character defects. Many of us...share with our sponsor what we have written. We can also work the Tenth Step by checking in regularly with our sponsor or other members, or by giving a thorough and rigorous accounting of ourselves at meetings...We report honestly any slippery thoughts or behaviors we have been engaging in... We review how well we have been using the tools of recovery, such as attending meetings, reading recovery literature, making phone calls or praying.”⁷⁵

The inventory of the Tenth Step helps us see how character defects manifest daily in our lives, but, what do we do when we realize that we have harmed someone? The Green Book suggests:

“When we recognize our error, we promptly admit it. First we admit it to ourselves, which means letting go of defensiveness and the desire to be “right” at all costs. Next we may admit it to our sponsor or other support people, especially if we need help in sorting out our amends, and to our Higher Power in prayer. Finally, we admit it to those affected by our behavior, and make any amends that are necessary... Often, however, we don’t need to do more than simply acknowledge our wrongdoing to the person affected. ...Admitting our wrongs as soon as possible helps keep shame and regrets from building up inside us, and allows us to more quickly regain our peace of mind.”⁷⁶

This is a new way of living for us and the Green Book emphasizes its importance:

“We may each find different ways to set aside this time, and different methods for taking stock. However we work this step, we act on our commitment to making continued self-examination part of our new way of life.”⁷⁷

“At this point in our recovery, we may have already experienced surprising growth in the quality of our relationships and the quality of our faith. Practicing the Tenth Step helps us continue to grow in self-acceptance, self-awareness, and rigorous honesty. We discover a greater willingness to take risks and learn from our mistakes. We are living in such a way as to keep our accounts balanced and our serenity intact.”⁷⁸

Basically, the Green Book authors have just informed us that our lives have already changed as a result of taking Steps One through Nine. They state that we have already had a spiritual awakening.

How could that be? Well, there is no way a Newcomer can get through these Steps alone. You have not only developed a belief in a God of your understanding, but you have come to rely upon this Power to help you through the inventory and restitution process. You are now living in the solution. Some of you may not realize it yet, but the **spiritual transformation** has already occurred.

Now, it's time to see who is ready to proceed. The Green Book directions for taking the Tenth Step say:

"In the Tenth Step we embrace the discipline of regular spiritual housecleaning. Just as we took action to repair the damage we caused in the past, so we continue taking inventory of our behavior, and making amends when needed, in our lives today."⁷⁹

For those who completed the first Eight Steps and are working on their Ninth Step amends, this is the Tenth Step question.

Will you continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as you go along?

Please answer during the next few minutes one at a time, yes or no.

Thank you.

All of you who answered yes to this question have completed Step Ten. Let's again give ourselves a big round of applause.

Now, let's move on to the Eleventh Step.

Step 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

Early in its discussion of Step 11, the Green Book tells us to make conscious contact daily to obtain guidance and strength.

"By making contact with God a conscious practice, we have allowed God into our lives, healing us, directing us, and changing us in ways that were never possible before. In Step Eleven we seek to improve this conscious contact, so that our spiritual connection will become not only the means by which we recover from our sex addiction, but our daily source of guidance and strength."⁸⁰

Our connection with our Higher Power can be done at any time during the day as the Green Book suggests:

"In the morning we might pray for God's help in facing the challenges of the day. In the evening we may express gratitude for our lives and for the gifts we have received in our recovery. These prayers frame our day, reminding us that nothing is more important than our relationship with our Higher Power."⁸¹

Essentially, we are praying to God to direct our thinking on how we should carry out God's Will for us today.

So, what do we do once we receive these God-directed thoughts regarding our upcoming day?

Writing down these God-guided thoughts can be viewed as an essential part of the morning meditation process, though the most important part is to be able to clear our minds to become aware of God's presence and join God's will for us. The Green Book book says:

"No matter which method we choose, we seek to clear our minds so as to become aware of God's presence and available to God's influence.

"By the time we get to Step Eleven, we already enjoy some level of conscious contact with our Higher Power. We have also grown used to asking God for help and for such spiritual gifts as wisdom, serenity, and courage. We have no need to give up these kinds of prayers when we come to this step. Yet in taking Step Eleven, we go further. We surrender our desire for particular results and ask only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out. We go beyond asking for things from God, into a practice of seeking to join our will with God's will for us."⁸²

Not all thoughts come from God. But, with the time and practice, we begin to rely upon these thoughts. The Green Book states:

"We come to recognize God's will as our highest good, and in so doing, our asking becomes founded in gratitude rather than self-seeking, faith rather than fear."⁸³

To protect ourselves from **absurd actions and ideas** we can test our thoughts to ensure that they come from God rather than our own self-will. We will use the following four tests: 1) Is the thought selfish or unselfish? 2) Is it dishonest or honest? 3) Is it resentful or pure? 4) Is it frightened or loving?

Here is how the testing of our thoughts works. When you finish your morning meditation, check what you have written. If what you have written is Honest, Pure, Unselfish, **AND** Loving, you can assume that those thoughts have come from God. Conversely, if what you wrote is Selfish, Dishonest, Resentful, **OR** Fearful, you can assume that those thoughts have come from self-will.

If God tells us directions on how to live, shouldn't we write down the directions so we don't forget them?

But, what if we don't receive any God given guidance? This can happen at any time. If we don't receive any guidance, it means we have spiritual work to do. Maybe we've taken back our will in some area of our lives, or maybe we haven't made a necessary amends. If so, we must take the actions necessary to re-establish our connection with the God of our understanding.

The Green Book adds that there are many other ways to use meditation to connect with God. What's common to all these meditation practices is this:

“[they all start]...when we take the time to slow down and focus without distraction. We set aside time without work, other people, TV, or other media demanding our attention. For the space of time devoted to meditation, seeking God's will becomes our conscious priority.”⁸⁴

Now we've seen how meditation can help us hear God's Will, but what about connecting to God through prayer?

The Green Book explains:

“For many of us, prayer means simply talking to God. Rather than struggling with our life's challenges as if we are alone and need to “figure it out” ourselves, we share our thoughts and feelings with our Higher Power...By sharing ourselves in this way, we bring ourselves regularly into the open, into the awareness of God's care.”⁸⁵

The Green Book continues:

“We have found it very helpful to pray at regular times during the day, as well as other times when we need to feel close to our Higher Power. In the morning we might pray for God's help in facing the challenges of the day. In the evening, we may express gratitude for our lives and for the gifts we have received in recovery. These prayers frame our day, reminding us that nothing is more important than our relationship with our Higher Power.”⁸⁶

Finally, the Green Book notes that by Step Eleven, our prayers have generally become less self-centered:

“We surrender our desire for particular results and ask only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.”⁸⁷

So, as we conclude our discussion of Step Eleven, we would like to offer a chance to everyone to practice a meditation exercise. There are many forms of meditation, we have chosen a form of meditation developed by the Oxford Group a precursor to Alcoholics Anonymous. Therefore, we now ask you to spend the next minutes in silence listening to your Higher Power and writing down the Divine guidance that you receive. We are going to guide you in this process.

Now, during the next two minutes, relax and open your hearts to God and silently say, in a natural way for you, that you would like to find [God's] plan for you, or help you see the path of any problem or situation you are facing today.

[Two minutes of silence.]

During the next five minutes listen and at the same time write down all the thoughts that flow. Don't say to yourself this thought isn't important; simply write everything. If no thoughts come, simply sit in silence and notice the quiet mind.

[Five minutes of silence.]

It is now time to test our thoughts. Are these thoughts completely honest, pure, unselfish and loving? Take the next couple of minutes to review each guidance and see if they are in line with all these four principles.

[Two minutes of silence.]

Now check something that you have written with your Workshop Sponsor during the next minutes and obtain their feedback.

[Three minutes of discussion.]

Thank you. We realize that guidance is a very personal matter. But, if you are willing, we ask you to share what you've written with the group in order to show those who may be skeptical, that God really does disclose to us.

Who's willing to share what they wrote?

[For the next 5-10 minutes, have Workshop Sponsors and Newcomers share their guidance.]

Thank you. Now, let's move on to the Twelfth Step.

Step 12

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts, and to practice these principles in our lives.

The Green Book begins discussing Step 12 by noting:

“Working this program leads to a spiritual awakening. Our relationship to the God of our understanding becomes an essential part of our lives. Through the process of the Twelve Steps, we let go of ways of thinking and acting that are based on fear, shame, and isolation, and we learn to rely on the guidance and care of a Higher Power. When we first came to the fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous, we may have sought only to stop acting out. But every step of the program contributes to a fundamental change in our outlook, from self-obsession and control to surrender and acceptance. Our sexual sobriety goes hand in hand with our spiritual growth.”⁸⁸

The Green Book further describes these **spiritual awakenings**:

“For some of us, this awakening may be a sudden and dramatic gain in awareness. For others, it may be slow and gradual, and we may not even realize we've had one until we reflect upon the changes that have occurred. Although our experiences are different,

certain aspects are common to many of us. We notice in ourselves a deepening humility that allows us to ask for and receive help when we need it. We find ourselves being less judgmental, more ready to let go of resentments and admit when we are wrong. We make the effort to repair relationships that we have damaged. We choose to keep the company of people who respect us, care for us, and treat us well. We start to see life in terms of growth, change, and transformation. We have a greater sense of belonging, intimacy, and true friendship. We endeavor to live according to our true purpose, which is God's will for us."⁸⁹

That is all there is to it. If you've made contact with the God of your understanding and you have started listening to guidance, you have in fact, already had the **spiritual awakening**.

But, the spiritual awakening is just the first part of Step Twelve. Let's see what we have to do to sustain this spiritual awakening.

The Green Book states:

"With spiritual awareness comes the responsibility, the desire, and the need to help other suffering sex addicts, just as help was freely given to us. This impulse springs from selfless love and gratitude, but it is also essential to our own sexual sobriety and spiritual growth. Carrying the message to our fellow addict is as important in maintaining our own recovery as it is in helping others find theirs.

Our message is simple and profound: that recovery from sex addiction is possible through working the Twelve Steps of SAA, and that following this program results in a spiritual awakening."⁹⁰

The Green Book provides us with many specific suggestions on how to carry our life-saving message of recovery to others. For now, we will only cover a few of them. They start with the following advice:

"When we carry the message directly to other sex addicts, we connect with them in a way that non-addicts cannot. We speak from experience. We have found that telling our stories is one of the most effective ways of carrying the message. We tell about our sex addiction: the pain, sorrow, suffering, and despair it brought; how we tried to stop or control it and how our efforts failed; the way our lives became unmanageable; the loss and suffering our addiction brought upon ourselves and others; and how we finally found recovery. By telling our stories, we demonstrate that we truly understand where others have been. And by sharing our recovery, we offer hope and show that there is a way out of our common addiction."⁹¹

The authors add:

“We carry the message to our fellow sex addicts with every act of encouragement, support, and service. We can help start a meeting and reach out to others in an area where there are no SAA groups. We can carry the message one-on-one, talking with another addict after a meeting. Or we may serve as part of larger groups or committees, contributing our time and talents to provide various services to the fellowship, to publicize our meetings, or to organize fellowship activities.”⁹²

Finally, the Green Book discusses how sponsoring others is an incredibly enriching way to work Step Twelve:

“One of the most direct and profound ways we can serve other members is by sponsoring them. We walk through the Twelve Steps with those we sponsor, passing on what we have learned from those who sponsored us.”⁹³

Then in the Green Book we find the closing message of hope in one of the stories that tell us in summary what to do to stop acting out:

“If you are new to this fellowship, it’s my hope that you stick with it. You will find that a life without acting out is a much better life indeed. If I can do this, you can too. Attend meetings, even after you “get better.” Trust in God, clean house, and help others. This is what has worked for me. As I see it, SAA is about learning to use simple metaphysical tools, connecting to a Higher Power on a daily basis, and living a life free from addiction. These are things we can’t learn from reading books. We recover best by doing.”⁹⁴

Trust God, clean house and help others! How much simpler can it get?

When **WE** work with others, **OUR** lives change. The Green Book states:

“However we do service, we receive much more than we give. First and foremost, our experience has shown that working with others safeguards our own abstinence. We keep the priceless gift of our sexual sobriety by being of service to other sex addicts. We receive many other gifts as well. We break out of the isolation and self-centeredness of our addiction. We grow as we practice generosity, empathy, and humility. We forge new bonds with others that nourish and sustain us. And we experience the joy and satisfaction of giving something of ourselves to a larger cause.”⁹⁵

Remember that each time we take members through the Twelve Steps, we learn more about this life-saving program and gain additional insight into the Divine inspiration that is the heart of our new way of life. And maybe at the next Workshop, some of you will return to lead these sessions.

For those who are ready, we will ask if you are willing to carry this message to other sex addicts who still suffer. So, the Twelfth Step question is:

Are you willing to carry this message to other sex addicts?

Please answer in unison –YES!

This completes the Twelfth Step as described in the Green Book, let's give ourselves a big round of applause

Now all that is left is to practice these principles in all our lives. What principles?—The Twelve Steps of Sex Addicts Anonymous! They are the principles we practice daily for the rest of our lives.

As the Green Book states:

“The Steps are an expression of spiritual principles that can be practiced in all aspects of life. Honesty, willingness, courage, humility, forgiveness, responsibility, gratitude, and faith are just some of the names we give to the spiritual principles that gradually come to guide us in our lives. As we progress through the program, establishing conscious contact with the God of our understanding, we become aware of these principles within us—like gifts that were always there, unopened until we were ready to receive them. Opening these gifts brings about our spiritual awakening. Continuing to apply them on a daily basis keeps us spiritually fit and growing in recovery. With the Twelfth Step we seek to consciously practice these principles in our lives, not only as ways to keep us sexually sober, although that will always remain important, but as lights to guide us in everything we do.

Practicing these principles in our lives means applying program principles at home, at work, and wherever else we gather with others for a common purpose. As we grow spiritually, we find opportunities for service in virtually any situation. Our closest relationships may offer the most challenges to our honesty, compassion, and integrity, but we are often rewarded beyond our expectations. We find that spiritual principles can guide us in the everyday challenges of life, and they can help us face even loss, grief, and death with fortitude and grace. What we gain in this program is a blueprint for full and successful living, whatever may come.”⁹⁶

The Green Book closes by noting:

“Our serenity and sobriety grow as we continue to live according to spiritual principles. We enjoy the gifts that come from being honest and living a life of integrity. We ask for help when we need it, and we express our love and gratitude every day. We realize that everything we have been through helps us to be of service to others. We learn that the world is a much safer place than we had known before, because we are always in the care of a loving God.”⁹⁷

We welcome each of you who have completed the Twelve Steps to this new way of living. We thank you for providing us the opportunity to be your guides for this miraculous spiritual journey.

Are there any questions?

Let's close the Workshop with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Quotes

- 1 SAA Green Book p.1
- 2 SAA Green Book, p.1
- 3 SAA Green Book p.9
- 4 SAA Green Book p.2
- 5 SAA Green Book, p.25
- 6 SAA Green Book p.21
- 7 SAA Green Book p.27
- 8 SAA Green Book p.27
- 9 SAA Green Book p.66
- 10 SAA Green Book p.4
- 11 SAA Green Book p.3
- 12 SAA Green Book p.20
- 13 SAA Green Book p.320
- 14 SAA Green Book p.320-321
- 15 SAA Green Book p.22
- 16 SAA Green Book p.25
- 17 SAA Green Book p.25-26
- 18 SAA Green Book p.27
- 19 SAA Green Book p.26
- 20 SAA Green Book p.26
- 21 SAA Green Book p.27
- 22 SAA Green Book p.28
- 23 SAA Green Book p.28
- 24 SAA Green Book p.30
- 25 SAA Green Book p.29
- 26 SAA Green Book p.29
- 27 SAA Green Book p.29
- 28 SAA Green Book p.30
- 29 Anonymous SAA member quote
- 30 SAA Green Book p.31
- 31 SAA Green Book p.32
- 32 SAA Green Book p.33
- 33 SAA Green Book p.36-37
- 34 SAA Green Book p.33
- 35 SAA Green Book p.33
- 36 SAA Green Book p.33-34
- 37 SAA Green Book p.34
- 38 SAA Green Book p.34
- 39 SAA Green Book p.34
- 40 SAA Green Book p.34
- 41 SAA Green Book p.34-35
- 42 SAA Green Book p.35
- 43 SAA Green Book p.35
- 44 SAA Green Book p.323-324
- 45 SAA Green Book p.35
- 46 SAA Green Book p.37
- 47 SAA Green Book p.37
- 48 SAA Green Book p.38
- 49 SAA Green Book p.38
- 50 SAA Green Book p.39
- 51 SAA Green Book p.40
- 52 SAA Green Book p.40
- 53 SAA Green Book p.40
- 54 SAA Green Book p.42
- 55 SAA Green Book p.42

-
- 56 SAA Green Book p.43
 - 57 SAA Green Book p.43
 - 58 SAA Green Book p.43
 - 59 SAA Green Book p.44
 - 60 SAA Green Book p.44
 - 61 SAA Green Book p.44
 - 62 Anonymous SAA member quote
 - 63 SAA Green Book p.45
 - 64 SAA Green Book p.46
 - 65 SAA Green Book p.48-49
 - 66 SAA Green Book p.49
 - 67 SAA Green Book p.49
 - 68 SAA Green Book p.50
 - 69 SAA Green Book p.49
 - 70 SAA Green Book p.51
 - 71 SAA Green Book p.51
 - 72 SAA Green Book p.51
 - 73 SAA Green Book p.51-52
 - 74 SAA Green Book p.52
 - 75 SAA Green Book p.53
 - 76 SAA Green Book p.54
 - 77 SAA Green Book p.52
 - 78 SAA Green Book p.55
 - 79 SAA Green Book p.52
 - 80 SAA Green Book p.55
 - 81 SAA Green Book p.56
 - 82 SAA Green Book p.58
 - 83 SAA Green Book p.58
 - 84 SAA Green Book p.57
 - 85 SAA Green Book p.56
 - 86 SAA Green Book p.56
 - 87 SAA Green Book p.58
 - 88 SAA Green Book p.58-59
 - 89 SAA Green Book p.59
 - 90 SAA Green Book p.59
 - 91 SAA Green Book p.59-60
 - 92 SAA Green Book p.60
 - 93 SAA Green Book p.60
 - 94 SAA Green Book p.165
 - 95 SAA Green Book p.60
 - 96 SAA Green Book p.60-61
 - 97 SAA Green Book p.60