



Why Stop Lusting?

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Why Stop Lusting?

Many of us came to Sexaholics Anonymous (SA) driven to total despair by our destructive sexual thoughts and behaviors. Within the meeting rooms of SA we discovered, to our surprise, that lust was the driving force behind our acting out. Sexual lust is an inordinate thought or feeling that drives us to use ourselves, others, or things for self-centered destructive purposes. The spiritual sickness of lust wants sexual stimulation at that moment instead of what a Higher Power or God of our understanding is offering us. Later we come to see that lust wants anything other than what is offered us each moment. At first it was hard to believe. As we began to accept this fact, we wondered how we could live without lust. It became clear that we had to give it up, yet we doubted that life without lust was possible.

In this fellowship of SA, we met people who had found a way to stop their destructive sexual behaviors. That too was unbelievable. Yet, by their honesty and shining faces, we knew it was true. They had the answer we desperately wanted.

Why Can't I Lust, Just A Little?

From the earliest days of our disease, we thought lust was our friend. We used it for many reasons: entertainment, as a refuge from pain, or to escape dealing with problems. Somewhere along the way we realized

that lust had become a bigger problem than the problems we were trying to avoid. The medicine became our poison. Our "solution" became the problem. We were out of control.

Lusting, for us, is like riding a roller coaster. Once started, it is nearly impossible to stop. Therefore, lust must be stopped where it begins, with the first drink. Getting out from under the influence of lust, therefore, would require us to avoid getting on board in the first place. That meant forsaking the thrill and the risk-taking. But how could we turn our backs on something that we had allowed to dominate our lives for so many years? How could we succeed now where we had failed a thousand times before?

Our addiction to lust is like the alcoholic's problem with alcohol. Just as the alcoholic cannot tolerate one drink of alcohol, we sexaholics cannot tolerate even the smallest drink of lust. Lust always leads to more lust, eventually making us drunk with it. Once drunk, the urge to act out sexually is impossible to resist. Even worse, lust keeps taking us deeper and deeper into behaviors we promised ourselves we would never do. The shame that these behaviors caused us required more and more lust to mask it. Just a little lusting simply doesn't work for sexaholics like us.

How Can I Stop Lusting?

First, we accepted that our entertaining lust leads to sexual acting out. The idea that we could stop the undesirable sexual behaviors while allowing lust to live in our minds had to be destroyed. The conclusion was inescapable: lust had to go if we were to quit the sexual acting out.

Second, we admitted we did not have the strength within ourselves to stop and that we needed a power greater than ourselves. Recognizing our weakness, we acknowledge our need for the 12 Step recovery process, the support of other recovering members, and a Higher Power or God of our understanding.

Third, we made a decision to follow SA's simple program of recovery.

These became the keys to experiencing progressive victory over lust. We stopped fighting lust and started surrendering it to our Higher Power. Having moved beyond the point of despair, we were finally able to give ourselves completely to this program of recovery known as the 12 Steps.

But What Will Happen To Me?

We who have lived with the problem of lust know all too well what it does to us. Lust is a wall that separates us and keeps us from enjoying full relationships with God and the

people around us. Lust drives us deeper and deeper inside ourselves and leads to isolation, loneliness, and despair. But, as we break the cycle of lust by taking the Steps of recovery, our experience of life begins to change dramatically.

As we begin to recover, we gain a new sense of integrity that makes us happy to be alive. No more hiding! No more lies! No more double life! As the burden of guilt and shame is lifted, we have more energy available for family and friends, work and play. A troubled and dark countenance gives way to a life that is happy, joyous, and free.

Breaking The Lust Habit

From personal experience we know lust is cunning, baffling, powerful, and patient. In the day-to-day grind, we wonder how might we win against such a foe that never sleeps and never quits?

In the past, when lust came knocking, we always opened the door. It was as if we had no other option. But today in recovery we do have a choice. There are many tools that we can use to keep the door closed to lust. Here are a few:

Honesty – For so long, we were afraid to tell anyone what was really going on in our heads. By keeping it a secret, we allowed our addictive thinking to grow and spread. By sharing our thoughts and actions with others in SA, we discovered that much of

the power of lust was removed. Therefore, members of SA are encouraged to share honestly both in and out of meetings.

Avoiding Triggers – Many things can trigger lust: movies, magazines, swimming pools, the Internet, even some things in the morning newspaper. Certainly there are endless opportunities to lust. By examining our personal lives closely and honestly, we can identify the thoughts, persons, places, and things that regularly cause us the most trouble. Having identified them, we now make decisions to avoid them, thus reducing our temptation to lust.

Prayer – We use prayers of all kinds to drive away lust. One quick prayer is, “God, help me.” Many of us ask God to bless the person we are wanting to lust after. We ask God to provide that person with all the good things we desire for our own lives. By doing so, we stop making that person a lust object, but rather a child of God. Another simple prayer requests, “God, whatever I am looking for in that person, may I find in you.”

Sponsorship - A sponsor is a more experienced recovering person who guides us through the Twelve Steps of recovery. Ideally, a sponsor is working the Steps, going to meetings, and has a sponsor himself or herself. A sponsor can help us use the Steps to surrender the obsession with lust in order to live a balanced and joyful life.

How do we know these tools work? The experience of thousands of recovering Sexaholics indicates it is working in their lives, one day at a time.

There Is Hope!

Progressive victory over lust is possible. We call on the God of our understanding for help; we lean on the fellowship for support; and we take the Steps of SA to recover. Anyone who follows this plan is sure to find great relief from the onslaught of lust.

Remember, lust will not disappear overnight. Take it one step at a time, one day at a time. Lust is tenacious; it does not give up easily. Our experience, however, has shown that anyone afflicted with sexaholism can get better if he or she is willing to be honest about the problem and follow the Twelve Steps and Traditions of SA's program of recovery. A life of freedom is available to all.

Remember, you are not alone! There are many others who share your problem but are in recovery and are waiting now to help you walk down this path. You need never be alone again.

Come, join us.