

CURE-SORT NEWS

Volume 23, Issue 1

Winter 2014



More Addictive Math By Ed G.

In an older issue of *The Outer Circle*, the bi-monthly publication of SAA, the *Let's Do the Math* article reminded me of something I came up with while serving as an Inmate Program Aide in my state's sex offender program. It is akin to a mathematical formula:

Thoughts + Feelings + Behavior + Opportunity = Acting Out/Offending (+C after each element of the equation. I'll explain its meaning later.)

Depending on how long one has developed obsessive sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, the acting out can take days, weeks, months, even years, to happen—or it can happen in a matter of minutes once opportunity presents itself.

Thoughts: My mind was consumed with thinking of ways to meet my perceived sexual “needs”—or, in the words of my Sex Offender counselor, my “sexual wants.” I doubt a day went by when I didn't think of with whom, where, and when, my perceived sexual needs/wants would be satisfied. I had no idea that I was treading in addictive waters. Me, addicted? No way! Being in places where there were a lot of females provided me with a veritable smorgasbord of thoughts as well as feelings but I never equated them with anything addictive. After all, sex is a natural human function. They did, however, give me the fodder for my fantasy sexual world. Consequently, dwelling on sexual matters is the essential first step to eventually acting out.

Feelings: We all have them—from feeling good to feeling sad and many others. But unchecked sexual feelings are step 2 in the “acting out” formula. If our thoughts are often sexual in nature, they are bound to generate sexual feelings. The sexual feelings I had reduced my effectiveness, in my eyes at least, in both work and volunteer activities. Seeking and finding sexual gratification took a lot of my time and gave me a false sense that I was okay—that I was in charge of my life—“I'm the man.” I didn't try to get in touch with my real feelings. I was, frankly, scared to look into them. I certainly knew that what I was thinking and feeling was not right so kept myself busy to avoid having to deal with them. Yet, at the same time, stressed myself to the

point that I mentally cried out for sexual relief, my “drug” of choice.

Behavior: As sex addicts, we obviously think sexual thoughts and develop sexual feelings all too frequently. The third part of the equation is usually considering ways to deal with them. Our behavior may be as “innocent” as viewing pornography either through books, magazines, or videos, or occasionally on the Internet, for example, or it may go from “innocent” masturbation, to the eventual violation of another human being, as I did. Use of many of the pornographic choices mentioned, fueled my desire for live contact—or vigorous personal sexual expressions to the exclusion of work, family, and friends. For the purpose of simplification, I use the term “pornography” to include all forms of sexual display: movies, strip clubs, adult book stores, etc. When these three forces built up, and opportunity presented itself, I was ready to act out.

Opportunity: This is the phase where serious acting out can soon become a reality. We have thought sexual thoughts and experienced sexual feelings (and they are most powerful feelings) and perhaps some “innocent” sexual behavior. In an effort to appease our overactive sexual being, we can even create our own opportunities. However, when we don't rein in our inappropriate sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, we put ourselves in a position to act on them—also often inappropriately. Yes, sometimes opportunity falls into our lap, but more often we are prone to make it happen.

Acting Out/Offending: In short, doing the “deed.” Yes, we may have demonstrated some acting out behavior in the third part of the equation, but now we've gone critical. Whether it be excessive self-fulfillment or involving

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Letters From Across the Nation

The following are excerpts from letters we receive. We appreciate your interest, concern, and feedback. We can't include every comment. The opinions printed below are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of CURE-SORT. These are examples of what we receive.

Danielle in Ohio

Thank you so much for responding to my email to confirm Dad's address change. I expected to maybe see a cookie-cutter response, so imagine my surprise when I ending up staring at the computer with tears running down my face!! Your sincere concern for me and my family (which leapt off the screen with just a couple of little sentences!!) has so rarely been expressed by anyone in 23 years that it hit me square in my heart this morning. I don't mean to get all emotional on you, but I had to take a minute to tell you how much I appreciate the personal response and the genuine offer to be of further support and help. What a breath of fresh air and obvious blessing to CURE-SORT you are!! I wish I could give you a huge hug for making my day. May God bless you, your family and all those that work with CURE-SORT.
With warm regards,

Joseph in Michigan

I appreciated your rundown of your trip to Michigan. Good to know we have such tireless advocates here.

Charles in Tennessee

Thank you for your support and continued efforts to educate the public about errants. Your publication has offered many helpful suggestions that will help me reintegrate with society and become a successful citizen. The most helpful resource obtained from you was the book **No More Victims**. Wow! Not having been selected for the sex offender treatment program in prison, this book has really opened my eyes.

From Jeff in Tennessee

I want to thank you personally, and on behalf of the inmates at BCCX who read the facility's newsletter, for the information that you sent us on sex offender treatment, recidivism rates and CURE-SORT. We used several of those articles in our newsletter as well as we are encouraging guys to join CURE-SORT. Most sex offenders are afraid to admit they have a problem, or to seek treatment or self-help programs, because they know if certain groups find out they will suffer verbal and possible physical abuse. Hopefully, by educating the prison population through our newsletter some of this aggression will subside and sex offenders will feel safe enough to seek help in dealing with their issues.

Therefore, the work that you and CURE-SORT are doing will result in reducing the recidivism rate of sex offenders and most importantly preventing sexual abuse!

CURE-SORT Welcomes New Board Member

Newest member to the CURE-SORT Board, approved in November 2013, is Dr. Nancy Irwin. Dr. Irwin is a treatment provider based in Los Angeles. She is a longtime member of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) and CCOSO (California Coalition on Sexual Offenders) and is also a public speaker and frequent media expert on sexual abuse prevention and recovery. As a survivor of adolescent clergy abuse, Dr. Irwin states: "It is my belief that the best way to prevent victims is to treat the perpetrators." She is completing a nonfiction, **Forgive Them: They Know Now What They Do**, a compilation of successful sex offender recovery stories.

Dr. Irwin is a health and fitness junkie, loves to travel, and is a rabid opera, theatre, and performing arts fan.

Healthcare Signup Can Be Done By Phone

As people reach parole, one consideration may be what to do about health care. Now that the Affordable Care Act, referred to as Obamacare, is in effect and applications are being taken, one person wrote to ask how those who are not allowed to use the Internet can apply.

Yes, there is a website to enroll or inquire and you've probably heard the stories that there have been a lot of problems with that site. Most of that has been resolved and it is now working much more smoothly. However, one thing not pointed out very often is the fact that a person can call a toll free number at 800-318-2596 for information and to sign up. That will be a way for a person to get the information needed.

PLEASE NOTE: Check the date on your mailing label to determine if your membership is due to expire. Also, please let us know if your address changes – especially inmates -- because your mail will not be forwarded. Be sure to include your prison I.D. number to guarantee proper mailing.

Resources

We are pleased to offer the following resources. We ask for a donation to cover postage and printing. U.S. Postage Stamps are acceptable.

"One Breath At A Time" by Ila Davis (\$17.50)

"Understanding Offending Behavior" by Stephen Price. (A collection of 9 of Stephen's articles from previous newsletters.) (\$4.00 for the set of 9 articles)

"When Someone on the Registry Moves Into my Neighborhood" (Member Price \$5; Non-Member Price \$10)

Donations should be mailed to CURE-SORT, P.O. Box 1022, Norman, OK 73070-1022

More Addictive Math

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others, it's a demonstration of our "powerlessness over addictive sexual behavior." We have directly or indirectly affected others in our quest for sexual fulfillment as we see it.

So, how do we counteract the "acting out" formula? One way, of course, is professional counseling. Self-education is another way. However, both of those have definite limitations.

Professional counselors are, for the most part, limited by probably not having experienced the unchecked, powerful draw that sexual thoughts and feelings can have on someone so addicted. And certainly, it is rare that one can self-educate themselves out of excessive sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. However, both methods may be useful. And this is where a 12-Step program comes in.

Meeting with like-minded addicted people, sharing stories, experiences, and solutions, working the Steps with a concerned and positive sponsor can do more to bring understanding and sexual sobriety to the addict than just counseling and/or self-education. And this leads to another formula:

Knowledge + Tools + Desire = Sexual Sobriety

- **Knowledge:** Knowing yourself and why your sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors play such a dominant role in your life—and how they can impact others.
- **Tools:** Anger management, meditation, counseling, medication, e.g., are helpful, but the understanding that comes from sharing with others in a 12-Step environment are the proverbial "icing on the cake" of sexual sobriety.
- **Desire:** You can have all the knowledge and tools available at your disposal, but if you do not have the desire to change your sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, then **sexual sobriety** probably is not going to happen.
- **Sexual sobriety:** This does not necessarily mean abstinence, though for some it may be necessary. It is acting sexually responsible with yourself and others. To reach sexual sobriety is a journey—not a destination. If you take what you have learned from all sources and apply them to your daily life—especially the 12-Steps—you will find the journey becoming easier and easier.

I mentioned earlier that there was another element to the formula that needs to be considered. It is that +C I noted. **C = Choice.** You have sexual **thoughts** that could lead to sexual offending, but you actually make a choice to do so or not. The same follows with **feelings.** Let them build and they can become overwhelming. Again, here is an opportunity to change your feelings. And, of course, once again you can either continue down the path that can lead to trouble, or you can make the choice not to carry out the inappropriate behavior. The **choice** is yours!

There you have it, acting out and sexual sobriety reduced to mathematical formulas. As with any formula, however, if you don't examine it, test it out, and understand the various components, the formulas may be doomed to failure.

CURE-SORT News

CURE-SORT News is a publication of CURE-SORT. SORT stands for Sex Offenders Restored through Treatment. CURE-SORT is one of eight issue chapters of a national criminal justice reform organization known as Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE), located in Washington, D.C. CURE's address is P.O. Box 2310, Washington, DC 20013. For more information on CURE-SORT, send letters to:

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To become a CURE-SORT member or make a donation, fill in, detach, and mail this form to:

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From the Editor's Desk

By Wayne Bowers

Sadly we must announce the passing of three good friends since our last edition, one was a former member of our board and one was presently on the board.

Those of you who have seen our issues back into 2012 have known that Bob Brown was battling cancer. He had such a positive approach that he shared in this column with you readers and I know he lived that. Sadly Bob took a turn for the worse around the end of the year and died earlier in January.

John Cosby of Roanoke, VA, who had served on our board in the past, suffered a debilitating brain tumor several years ago and courageously continued as much active life as possible with help from those near to him, but in late summer he turned for the worse and died in late September 2013.

Guy Baughman and his family of Arlington, VA, had been in close contact with me for several years while their son Galen dealt with the criminal justice system in Virginia. A medical procedure to determine the status of some cancer treatment turned tragic as Guy sustained severe brain damage during that time and eventually died in November 2013.

Bob and Pam Brown had come in touch with me in 1999 as they sought information as a family member was dealing with the criminal justice system in Wisconsin. That initial communication carried on and their concern to help make changes until the Browns decided to become involved with our organization and were named members of the board. We held board meetings at their home at times and it was my pleasure to visit in their home several times, including a wonderful time last May.

When I made the move to Oklahoma for family reasons in 2007, the Browns took on the role of the majority of the office duties of the organization. Pam's business duties led her to resign last year. Bob had contacted me in 2012 to explain the evaluation of cancer. In late 2012 we held a serious discussion on how it would be best for the office duties to be removed, as his condition was going to only get worse. It was at that time that we began the transformation of the office to here in Oklahoma and the address change was made.

Of course, the official name change of the organization occurred in May 2013 to complete the major transformation that was done. Many of you continued to ask about Bob and to send your thoughts and prayers to him and Pam and those are much appreciated. Memorials to AngelsGrace Hospice, Oconomowoc, WI, or Family Ministries at Grace Church New Berlin are very much appreciated and may be sent to Krause Funeral Home, 21600 W. Capitol Dr., Brookfield, WI 53072.

I had met John Cosby in 1995 at a CURE convention when he attended all breakouts on sex offender topics in Washington, DC. That led to a close friendship and fellow advocates in this field. I learned he had earlier been a lay minister to many persons with sex offenses when living in Seattle. When our founder Loren Perry died in 1997, John was a great help. I had just moved to Michigan less than a year and I was in a whirlwind on what was going to occur. Loren had developed the non-profit Sex Abuse Treatment Alliance for workshops and training and I had come on board to direct CURE-SORT. John helped to re-write the By-laws to incorporate them together. He was involved in other work at times in Indianapolis and we were able to go over operations at times, and his discussions and correspondence with prisoners was so helpful.

Complicated, brash, knowledgeable, opinionated, caring, dedicated and a very dear friend all sum up John. One letter I received from an Oregon prisoner who John had befriended told so many ways of reaching out that he had done, even more than I ever knew.

The Baughman family had kindly hosted a reception for all criminal justice advocates familiar with CURE and CURE-SORT last June when we held our annual meeting in suburban Vienna, VA, and we are all so appreciative of that gesture. I got to know Guy and Garnet during their difficult times with Galen away, both at their home and when they visited Michigan to take another child to a music camp and at times when I visited Washington. They truly went to bat for Galen to challenge so many things in the legal system that there isn't time to list them. Guy and his family are strong believers in all of CURE's advocacy.

There could be much more said about these good people. My thoughts and prayers, and those of all the CURE-SORT family, go out to each of them. Each was a wonderful friend who we always will remember.