

TOOLS FOR MAKING YOUR PROGRAM PORTABLE

Take What Works and Leave the Rest

The experiences of a number of us have shown these tools and program concepts will tend to help one stay connected and sober when traveling.

DEVELOP A TRAVEL PROGRAM AND PLAN WELL IN ADVANCE OF LEAVING

Build a travel plan that includes daily calls, and electronic voicemails and email, if email is safe for you.

Locate and plan to attend SAA meetings, write down locations and times.

ISO of SAA in the US and Canada: 1-800-477-8191, elsewhere call: +1-713-869-4902

Check the ISO website for local meetings: HYPERLINK "<http://saa-recovery.org/Meetings/>"<http://saa-recovery.org/Meetings/>

There are online and telephonic meetings available to you. Please refer to the SAA Telemeeting Intergroup for details: HYPERLINK "<http://www.saataalk.info/>" <http://www.saataalk.info/us/>

Plan where you will be staying. Avoid specific hotels, travel spots and locations that you may find triggering. Avoid former acting out places if you can.

Discuss your plan in meetings, with program friends and with your sponsor, before you leave. Be accountable to others when planning and working your travel program.

Use phone and email book-ending on significant events when traveling – plan these in advance as best you can.

Some of us call this plan or program we build in advance our "portable program." We will use the same plans and concepts over and over again when we travel.

WHEN TRAVELING, LIVE ACCORDING TO YOUR PLAN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Virtual Meetings

Build a "virtual meeting." Save messages that especially moved you or touched you over the previous couple of weeks. Just before leaving make an extra amount of calls so, hopefully, a number of people will call back and leave messages you can listen to later.

In a hotel room or a quiet space away from family, friends or co-workers, you can listen to messages and respond, you can even respond more than once to the same message over a period of days. You may find program friends expressing gratitude for your doing this – you may be helping others to stay sober as you do so yourself.

Hyper-Loading Program Contacts

Think about *increasing* your program contacts, rather than decreasing your program contacts, when you travel. You can do this through calls, voicemails, emails and writing letters.

Many think that since they are traveling, program contacts are harder to maintain. That can prove to be the case if you are away from phones and computer access. Yet, you can hyper-load on those days when you are able to be in contact, much like a marathon runner carbo-loads before a long run. Instead of a few calls, messages or emails, do as many as you can during those few days during a trip when you can be in touch.

HALT-Like Feelings

When away from our home group, from our daily regimen or when visiting certain locations, many of us find that our desire to return to addictive behaviors increases. We might be jet-lagged, lonely, homesick, anxious, not eating well or just out of our routine. Be on special alert for these feelings and HALT-like symptoms. Watch for the addict coming up in you or slipping into a bubble. Just as we need to get enough rest or the right foods to eat to avoid HALT, so we need to stay on a solid diet of support, recovery and spiritual tools.

Meetings

Other forms of contact are available, including teleconference meetings and online meetings. Even if these are in different S programs, or other programs, experience has shown some real-time contact, or virtual contact, is better than no contact at all.

As noted, in advance of leaving you can research meetings that may be in and around the places you will visit. While it is preferable to choose a meeting in SAA, many have found it helpful to attend other "A" meetings if SAA meetings are not available.

Many of us have found that identifying as "recovering addicts" and sharing in generalities is still very helpful. Some of us do identify as sex addicts in other "A" meetings. This choice is up to the individual. For those who do not identify as sex addicts in other meetings, we do not do so because of shame or denial; we do not identify as sex addicts so we do not offend anyone who may not feel comfortable with shares related to sexual addiction. We feel this keeps with the traditions. Other "A" meetings exist for the benefit of those who identify with that particular addiction and we may want to avoid anything that might cause unnecessary harm or detriment to others as we work our own program.

Many of us have found that if we need closer human contact in another "A" meeting, we might seek out one who shared in a way that resonated in us, so we may have a more personal conversation with them after the meeting.

In non-English speaking countries, research for meetings in advance that may be held in English, or other "A" meetings that may be in English.

As with many of our programs when at home, assuring that we fit some meetings into our travel schedule, instead of doing so at the last minute or as an after-thought, can prove very helpful, if only to stay in touch and build some fellowship among other addicts.

Step Work and Reading

As with our home programs, reading, writing and working the steps can prove very helpful when traveling.

Bring along your big book, 12x12, other program literature and spiritual works of your choice. Making time to read may also help you build a sound portable program. If traveling with others and needing to preserve your anonymity, some have found spiritual and outer circle readings and books to be a good substitute.

Are you in the middle of a step, or have you put off working on your next step? Traveling may be a good time to do the writing or meditative process one needs to jumpstart or supplement one's step work.

Live in Your Outer Circle

Planning and doing outer circle activities, especially if traveling on business or with those who may "push your buttons," is the hidden value in many of our portable programs. Traveling is usually a good time to visit a friend, take a tour, visit a local place of meaning for you, find a local place of worship or meditation, perform affirming physical and outdoor activities, meet new friends, etc. Part of our portable programs always includes some outer circle activities and planning.

Stay With What Works for You

For many of us, putting our program and recovery first has helped us to maintain a fit spiritual condition and build our sobriety and abstinence. Think about doing the same when traveling. For many of us, a morning practice is very helpful and gets the day started off on the right foot. Prayer, meditation or spiritual work may be part of your daily and weekly routine. When traveling,

consider making time and space for your morning practice or other daily and weekly practices. For some, there is a need to avoid TV, sugars or other things that tend to trigger of our sex addiction. We have found there is a greater need to avoid known triggers when traveling. When at home, do you like to journal? Exercise? Attend religious services? Plan to do these same outer circle and supportive activities when you travel.

Yes, Slogans Travel Too

Slogans work when traveling: Easy does it and one day at a time, when traveling. If you cannot apply the described tools in a measure that feels right for you, then take it easy, be gentle on yourself, and just mentally plan for your return home. What are the first meetings you will go to? Who will your first calls be to? What would you say in those calls or in those meetings about your trip?

BUILD A PLAN FOR RE-ENTRY

Finally, as many of us learned, having a re-entry plan is a very prudent tool to use. Oftentimes, we plan for the trip itself and take a good program with us, yet our return home can surprise us with feelings that drive our addiction and old behaviors. So, as you build your plan to be away before leave, build a plan to come home by, your "re-entry plan." A re-entry plan might include:

Calling your sponsor immediately when you arrive home.

Having certain program friends expecting your call after you arrive at home, like book-ending the whole trip.

Knowing the first two or three meetings you will go to, and making a commitment to your sponsor or others that you will attend those meetings.

Certain program and spiritual readings that personally inspire you, a trip to your place of worship, or outer circle activities you missed while away.

A good portable program includes not only the planning one does before leaving town and the actions one takes when away, but also the actions one takes when first arriving home.

_____ 'S PORTABLE PROGRAM
FOR THE TRIP TO _____

List what 4-5 program tools you could take on the road with you.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
List 4-5 program friends you could keep in extra contact with and how many times a day you would make calls and how many calls you would make.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Write down the name of your sponsor and indicate how often you intend to call him or her.	
Do you have voicemail, a message machine or email? If so, how many messages would you send before leaving on your next trip? List who you might send these messages to.	<p>How many messages before you leave? _____</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
What program book(s) you will bring on the road with you? What could you read from it (them)?	
What step on you working on? If you traveled tomorrow, what work might you do on that step?	
List 4 things you would do for your program each day that can include any of the above.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4.

List two meetings you might attend during your travels or list where you will go to find those meetings.	1. 2. How to find a meeting:
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_____ **'S RE-ENTRY PLAN**

When will you call your sponsor?	
Which 2-3 program friends will you call immediately after you get home?	1. 2. 3.
What is the first meeting you will attend? The second meeting?	1. 2.
What Outer Circle activities can you engage in within 24 hours of your return? Certain Outer Circle things you have especially missed?	
How will you otherwise work to avoid HALT when you return?	

Re-entry can be very difficult for some of us, so best to plan now and get all the information and support at the convention before going home.

Consider speaking with your sponsor or a trusted and sober friend in S-recovery to have them review or help you to complete your portable program and re-entry plan.

CONGRATULATIONS!

**You now have a Portable Program and a Re-entry
plan!**

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