

## **COMMENTARIES ON THE CHARACTERISTICS MOST OF US SEEM TO HAVE IN COMMON**

### **Characteristic 7:**

**“Sex was compartmentalized instead of integrated into our lives as a healthy element.”**

Many of us went to great lengths to hide our sexual compulsion. Some of us even lived double lives. We operated a secret life, sometimes even creating an alternate persona for acting out. We associated with people who would never interest us in non-sexual contexts, perhaps people who would embarrass us if known by our friends. Some of us kept our sex lives in a box, believing that it bore no relevance to our regular lives. Within that box, some of us often further separated sex from emotion. Others among us infused nearly every aspect of our lives with sex; rarely did we respect others' limits or respect our own right to sexual privacy. We were able to rationalize any sexual activity, no matter how extreme, dangerous or even illegal. Compartmentalization allowed some of us to balance and reconcile disparate sexual desires and activities, as well as conflicts in sexual orientation we had not resolved. We were fragmented beings who partitioned different areas of our lives—especially sex and sometimes romance—as if they belonged to different people.

In recovery, we strive to become whole, and to integrate the compartmentalized parts of our lives. We let go of our obsession with secrecy and strive for integrity in all areas of life. Rather than playing roles, we bring our true selves to situations and choose to share ourselves appropriately. The honesty of being who we are reduces our shame. We develop the ability to recognize and capitalize on our character assets, and learn ways of minimizing or removing our character defects. We integrate sex into our lives as a healthy element. As we become the people we actually are, each of us often finds that this is the person we actually want to be.

(Extract from “The Characteristics Most of Us Seem to Have in Common” © SCA-ISO)