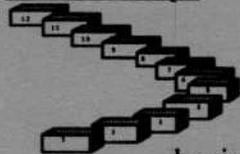




Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

Circle of Steps



Circle of Steps

I was horrified to discover that a counselor who does not even think that masturbation under healthy circumstances is wrong, believed my behavior self-hurtful and dangerous. (Page 2)

RAP AROUND - We are still waiting on you - send us your groups' checkin! (Page 3)

Living in Recovery Many who come to SAA have experienced incest or child sexual abuse, and, as a result, have acted sexually to mask the pain of feeling uniquely different and damaged. (Page 3)

The Corner of Tradition

Slowly I became more willing to look for what we had in common, and slowly, I began to feel less isolated and less unique.

Rhythm of Recovery And I guess we can see from this, that everything is in...

God's time,

God's time,

God's time....(Page 7)

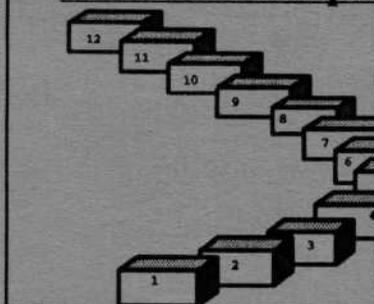
Just an Opinion

I feel I am failing you in my role of trusted servant. (Page 6)

The Key  **Service or ServeUs?** (Page 10)

Happy New
Year!

Circle of Steps



Step One : Broken Silence

My earliest memories of acting out sexual behavior began around age five, when I began to use masturbation to medicate my feelings and to escape. I was steeped in that practice through my entire childhood and teen years, and actually until I married my husband at age 17. I kept my behavior entirely secret, never trust-

ing anyone with my inner suffering.

My behaviors were self-hurtful and progressively degrading. Somehow I compartmentalized my awareness of them, as they crystallized into an automated part of my insane private life. Although I always knew in my heart there was something very wrong with what I was doing, I felt hopelessly trapped in a child's mentality... hopelessly imprisoned by my immeasurable degree of shame.

A self-destructive and punishing habit of chewing my fingernails and cuticles down to the quick became an outward manifestation of my self-hate, shame and guilt. At times I could hardly use my hands, because of the pain. I have carried that subtle signature of my inner woundedness and lack of serenity ever since I can remember. Still today, I fight an almost compulsive need to hurt myself in this way. In retrospect, I believe it was my shame that fed my need to find God and some kind of spirituality at age 7 or 8 when I became interested in the Bible.

As a teenager, I was hit with the realization that if I were to have the quality of relationship with God that I wanted, I would have to give up my addictive sexual practices. For me sobriety would have to mean no masturbation and sexual satisfaction only as a married woman. Since I could not stop, this realization triggered a horrible inner conflict. I berated myself for not being strong enough — for not loving God enough — and imagined that my inability to stop was evidence that God did not want me. I obviously didn't have His spirit and therefore I must be no good. I became chronically depressed and suicidal. I thought often about ending my life as a teenager.

I have been caught up in a terrible struggle between my addiction and my relationship with God for most of my life, finding some relief only during my 17 married years, when my addiction seemed to disappear. Still my guilt, shame self-recriminations and hate relentlessly remained as evidence of the damage below the surface. Though I stayed away from compulsive sexual behavior for

Rap Around



We are holding a spot for your group here in the PBR. Let us know what is going on - big or little, anything we are doing in the area of recovery is helpful, You may be surprised how much help we are to each other. Please treat this box as a meeting/group/area checkin box. The best problem I could have is to have too many articles to print. Please give me that problem!!

RAP AROUND

Send news for Rap Around to PBR, NSO of SAA, PO Box 70949, Houston TX 77270. Include a phone number. Remember that the PBR goes out by bulk mail, so send news of events well in advance. (or Email to pauldavid@aol)

Living in Recovery

Working the First Step

Many who come to SAA have experienced incest or child sexual abuse, and, as a result, have acted sexually to mask the pain of feeling uniquely different and damaged. Healing from child sexual abuse can happen through working the twelve steps. The process involves relating the techniques given by the steps to the particular issues arising from the damage done to us by out of control adults. In the case of the perpetrators, this means the damage done to both our victims and ourselves. Perpetrators' problems are usually compounded by even more guilt about the pain we have caused our victims and our own family and friends.

Working Step One means simply admitting that it has happened — that we did it or that it was done to us. If we were victims, we may be denying it because we were molested by a trusted relative or friend. The psychic pain may be so intense that we have kept it very deeply buried so that we may survive our daily aches and pains.

If we have perpetrated, we are afraid of the punishment and will lie to ourselves and others to escape the consequences of our actions.

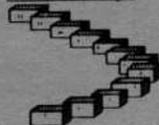
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most of that time, I was reminded of its baffling presence during a time when my husband and I agreed to be celibate. When I found myself retreating to the same behavior, I felt horrified that I couldn't abstain for even a short time.

Circle of Steps



Undoubtedly the most profound evidence that my life had become unmanageable was that I was unable to believe that God could or would ever love me or reward me for anything. Even though I believed very deeply in the Biblical promises which offer God's love to whoever asks for it, my dysfunction made it nearly impossible for that love to override my lifelong belief that I am inherently bad, beyond the reaches of God's love.

I made many promises to myself and God about the abstaining from this behavior and repeatedly broke them. My self-objectifying behavior was frequent, self-hurtful and filled with unhealthy fantasy. It was clear that I couldn't desist from my behavior. With all the rich spiritual resources at my disposal, I concluded that I was no good and that God could not possibly want me. Again I thought of ending my life. My love for my child and God was the abiding force that prevented me.

When my marriage ended at the age 36, I began therapy. I trusted a therapist with the outer edge of my sexual issues and her message was the guilt religion imposes on sexuality was the problem. She seemed to miss my compulsivity and my inability to live by my values completely. I went back into hiding — having decided that baring even the tip of this horrible iceberg of shame was not a worthwhile risk. For another ten years I put my fight aside until I met an insightful therapist who helped me look at the core of my shame.

It was in the process with her about my fears for my daughter's wellness, that she explained to me that when a parent harbors a secret compulsion, certain things align in their outside life that invite and create the necessity for an addiction to enter. Then I heard something that brought me to my knees and the doorstep of SAA. She said "If you want to help your daughter with her addictions, the best thing I know is to begin working on your own." This really hit me where I live, because I would do anything to help my daughter feel better.

Though I harked and said I could never come to SAA, that I didn't belong here — that my life was not unmanageable or out of control - still I agreed to think about it. Clearly I came to my first meeting out of arrogance, feeling certain one meeting would be enough to prove that I was open enough to the possibility and that

(continued on page 11)

The Corner of Tradition

**Our common Welfare should come first;
recovery depends upon SAA unity.**

The first word of the traditions like the first word of the steps tells us we are not alone, and the rest of the tradition tells us why it is so important to remember this -- because our recovery and our lives depend on it. Without Unity, our organization will die. This does not mean that the individual must conform, ore that we all must think and act alike; quite the contrary, no organizations celebrate and nurture individuality like the Twelve Step programs do. The point is that our differences in life experiences and opinions become irrelevant because we have that most important thing in common; we are sex addicts.

Year ago, when I was new to the Twelve Steps programs, I found myself meeting and connecting with people I would never come across in my addictive days. I remember marveling at the helpful and precious gifts I received in the words of people seemingly so different and unlike myself. Because I wanted to recover, I was forced to drop some of my old stereotypes about people. Slowly I became more willing to look for what we had in common, and slowly, I began to feel less isolated and less unique. Now this unity of purpose has become an integral part of my spirituality. I believe that when I stretch myself to experience that common bond, I am tapping into a sort of spiritual conduit and certainly a lifesaving stream.

Lisa G.



JUST AN OPINION

In the beginning of the year it is appropriate to address the concerns of the year. I just listened to several people speaking. Some in a meeting. Some on TV. Some in my home. All speaking about the same thing. . .

Primary Purpose. My primary purpose in working on this Newsletter is to be of service to you as members of this wonderful fellowship. It offers me the opportunity to work with spiritually directed people who see their primary purpose to serve you as well. All of this service is simply a part of each of our programs. Serving you is serving ourselves in a fashion.

Additionally this opportunity provides me with an outlet for my personal program and a vehicle to communicate to many fellow addicts I would otherwise not be speaking with. Although all of this is true, I feel I am failing you in my role of trusted servant. I have received 16 pieces of literature since I began working on the PBR, all of which were inspired. Just as I am grateful when someone shares in a check-in meeting, or speaks in a speaker meeting, I am also grateful to those who share in the PBR. When I reflect on the times when I gave my 5th step, spoke at speaker meetings or wrote articles for the PBR, I am again moved to gratitude for the opportunity to release some of the shame which accompanies my disease. When someone uses the PBR as a vehicle, they release shame and strengthen their personal program. We must not be providing the opportunity clearly enough to all of you, for not many are responding. There must be something I can do, is a phrase which runs in my head. But the only thing I know I can do is to continue to be here. Let me use this space to encourage you to send your articles to the PBR national office or send to pauldavid1 on America On-Line (for other services pauldavid1@AOL). If you have suggestions or information about what your group is doing as well, we need all information about what is happening in recovery. Please do not judge your work as "good" or "bad". I was recently in a meeting when someone shared their experience of shame for the first time. Thought this person had been in the program a long time this sharing opened up possibilities that were not there before. It also provided a link between us that was not there before. When I came in the program initially, someone told me we were only as sick as our sickest secrets. The more I am able to share my story, the more I am able to recover, the more I am able to share my story the more I am able to recover the more I am able to share my story the more etc. We hear enough about the disease through the media. Please use this space to share your experience strength and hope. Our groups have but One Primary Purpose after all "to carry its message to others who still suffer." David G., Editor, PBR

GOD'S TIME

When I think about all the time that I spent wasted
 I really don't know why it took so long
 But it hurt so bad that I could taste it
 And I guess we can see from this, that everything is in...

God's time,
 God's time,
 God's time....

Aint got no control over the future
 Or how things are gonna go
 All I know is that things will go
 And they will go the way they are supposed to
 The way they are supposed to...

If you keep a secret
 It's something that is so hard to bear
 Eventually it will eat you up inside
 And leave just a shell of emptiness and foolish pride...

But once you let it out
 Things start to change
 Freedom can finally be felt
 It's so strange, so strange, so very, very, strange...

In God's time, God's time, God's time
 It's all gonna be alright, be alright
 There's no other way it can be-no other way to see it
 But alright...alright
 It's alright...
 It's alright...
 It's alright...
 In God's time.

Eric C.

The purpose of the Plain Brown Rapper is to be a voice of the SAA Membership, published by and for those recovering from compulsive sexual behaviors. We strive to be informative, sensitive, and responsive in expressing the experiences, strengths & hopes of recovering sex addicts. Unless otherwise noted, the content of the PBR reflects the opinions of the writers & editors & not necessarily of the NSO, Literature Committee, or Sex Addicts Anonymous as a whole. Contents ©SAA.

NSO's PBR Subscriptions are available for \$12 (\$18-international) for 12 issues from:
PBR Subscriptions
NSO of SAA
PO Box 70949 Houston TX 77270.
713-869-4902

Editor: DavidG



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Living in Recovery



Perhaps we rationalize what we did by pretending that our victims wanted us to do what we did, or that we were engaged in sex education or that our actions did not really hurt anyone. Perhaps we took the attitude that society was to blame for being so uptight about sexuality — heaven forbid that there could be anything wrong with the fulfillment of our desires.

Whether perpetrator or survivor, we are afraid of remembering fully. We are afraid that overwhelming feelings of fear and excitement will sweep back over us and we will be powerless once again — under the control of others as victims, or under the control of addictive urges as perpetrators. In recovery, we will be reminded over and over again, of how much courage it takes to admit and remember what happened. At this stage we need support. Once the remembering begins it is difficult to stop it. The pent up emotions of shame, anger, fear and grief may be enormous. Victims and survivors may still have such great fear of perpetrators that it feels impossible to talk about issues in the context of an SAA group, where there may be perpetrators. If this is the case, we must seek help from someone that we do trust, a member of the group, our sponsor, a clergyman or a therapist.

If we are perpetrators, we need to face the consequences of our actions. In most states there are laws mandating teachers, therapists and other professionals to report cases of child abuse. The legal consequences vary with locality and with public education and attitude. The important thing to remember, if we have molested a child, is that the child almost certainly needs professional help to understand and work through what has happened. To bring this about, we may need to turn ourselves in to the authorities. If we are accused, we will not help the situation by denying what we have done. On the other hand, we need not make the legal consequences any worse than they need to be. Having a lawyer to help us through the situation with dignity can help us rebuild our sense of self-worth. If our case has been publicized we will probably feel shame and that we are outcasts in our community. We may be surprised at how many of our friends still care about us, even though they do not condone what we have done.

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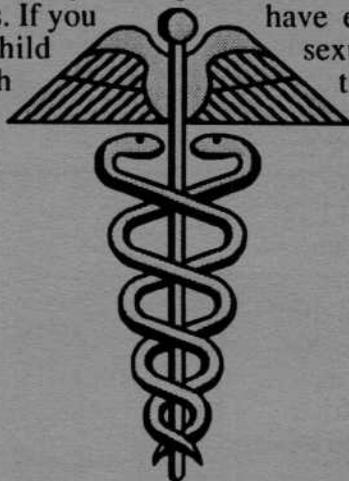
Living in Recovery

If we are survivors, we may find that people close to us do not believe us, especially those in our families. We have been caught up in the sick family systems in which the perpetrator has, in one way or the other, been enabled in his or her illness by the others in the family. We may face not only disbelief, but hostility for upsetting the system and for bringing attention to the family secrets. If we do not persist in exposing the perpetrator, other children may be at risk. Indeed, we may need protection from perpetrators in denial who try to batter us emotionally and physically. We need to ask and keep asking for help until we get it.

Luckily, many programs now exist to treat those caught up in the cycle of child sexual abuse, although, unfortunately, there may long waiting lists. There are also self-help groups for survivors of incest and child sexual abuse.

Most importantly we need to stop holding everything in — trying to control what happened and the consequences. We need to let go, admit or acknowledge what has happened, and ask for help until we get it. We will learn that we are not alone. We pray, cry, journal, share with others and feel the pain. Eventually we do go on through to the other side.

Work on the first step is healing. The first step presented as a “formal first step” is dramatically healing. Remember, we are only as sick as our deepest secrets. If you have experiences of healing from incest or child sexual abuse that you are ready to share with the SAA community, please send them to the editor of the PBR. You may use the direct mail or email it to him at pauldavid1@aol.



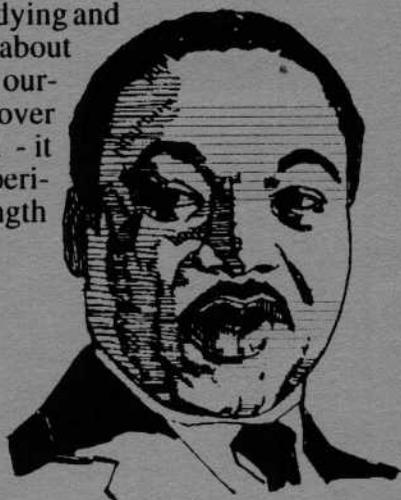


The Key

Service or ServeUs

The key to all of our work is service or serve us? Our groups' primary purpose is to help other suffering addicts. We do this in a lot of ways. Cleaning out ashtrays, picking up coffee cups, setting up the coffee maker, getting out literature, passing on literature, chairing a meeting, visiting a meeting in a prison, sending out PSA's, writing articles for a local newsletter or for the PBR, sponsoring members, Twelve stepping -- to name a few. . . all wonderful opportunities to carry the light into the darkness of our own selves for it is in this service that we actually serve us.

Last week the darkness flooded our meeting for a moment as we found that John had died. He had a been a member of SAA and is a good example of how the extremes this of disease can impair our living - or end it. A young man with a lot of hope. -- light extinguished. Another light extinguished was Martin Luther King, Jr. who would of had a birthday today, had he still been alive. Today it is very clear how they are connected. The hope of life seemingly damaged, yet with the deaths of those we care about, comes a new urging to do something about the darkness. . . to spread new light . . . to avoid other dying and keep life fully alive! It really is about service. The best way to serve ourselves is to serve others. As I read over this, it sounds like a proclamation - it is not! It is only what I have experienced and am sharing as my strength and hope.



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I did not really belong. Surely my therapist would not bother me with such a horrifying idea again!

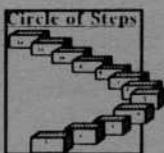
However, when I came to the group and met some of the people here, I was deeply impressed with the way everyone seemed to be working so hard on themselves. After taking the assessment I realized that if I really wanted to know whether I was addicted, I would finally have to trust the content of my sexual behavior with someone.

When I finally broke the barriers and began talking about these behaviors, I was crushed with feelings of shame and guilt. While I had rationalized for years that I could not have been infected with the family addiction because I wasn't acting in the same ways they were, I began to realize that my secret addiction had taken its toll on my sense of self-respect, peace and spirituality. I was horrified to discover that a counselor who does not even think that masturbation under healthy circumstances is wrong, believed my behavior self-hurtful and dangerous.

Though my sexual behavior has not manifested itself in an outer sexual inappropriateness that would have been readily observable by others, it has placed me in an isolation that has almost ruined my life. It has fed my loneliness and distrust of others, affected the quality of my parenting and set my daughter up for her own depression, not to mention my inability to receive God's love.

I have come face to face with the shame and isolation that I have been living in all my days. While my outer life passes as presentable, my inner life has become totally unmanageable. I realize that I am confronted with the ultimate choice all addicts must face — recovery or death. I want recovery. That's why I am here. I am grateful to have a place to come where I need not keep those secrets anymore. I am grateful for the opportunity to begin freeing myself from the behaviors that I have trapped myself with all my life.

Nad



Mental Floss

Friends of the Literature Committee (FOLC)

The Literature Committee is made up of elected representatives an alternate from each region, up to three at-large representatives, and the editor of the PBR. We want to involve more SAA members for literature work. Fill the form out to connect to the network of people interested in creating and distributing recovery literature. Send it to **Friends of the Literature Committee, c/o NSO of SAA, P.O. Box 70949, Houston TX 77270.** (or email DavidG at pauldavid1@aol)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____ Fax Number _____
Email Address _____ Intergroup _____
Do you have a computer? Mac PC Modem? _____

Friends of the Literature Committee (FOLC)

Some projects we are working on:

- **Plain Brown Rapper** — increase the distribution of PBR in local areas and intergroups and finding local group or intergroup news contacts
- A booklet on **sponsorship**
- A short guide to **working the 12 Steps**
- A book on the **12 Steps** (to be published in 1997)
- **Translations** of our literature into **Spanish** and **French** (We are looking for translators and reviewers of material already translated)

Do you have ideas for new literature? Send us your ideas or literature you have published for use by your meeting or intergroup.

NSO of SAA P.O. Box 70949 Houston, TX 77270.
713-869-4902 - Messages can be left any time
Office hours are between 10 am and 6 P.M.. Central Time

Subscribe to the Plain Brown Rapper \$12(\$18-International) for 12 issues. It includes news of the worldwide fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous, stories of recovery, practical advice on working the steps, & more. Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ subscriptions to the Plain Brown Rapper.

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