



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

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In This Issue...

2 Recovery Toolbox

Who Keeps Us Sober? A reflection on how each part of the the Lord's Prayer parallels many aspects of the life of recovery.

4 Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions

In the Sixth Step, we ask God to remove our defects of character. A member shares how an experience with a deadly snake helped him reflect on this step. The Sixth Tradition reminds us that SAA doesn't endorse or lend the SAA name to outside activities.

6 Feature

Criticism and the Coffepot, or How I Moved from Anger to Gratitude. The gifts of the program helped a member see himself in a new way and helped him move away from old behaviors.

10 Fellowship Forum

Getting It Said In One Minute! A report discussing the 1995 Delegate Convention.

A Sobering Thought...

*I am not dismayed
by a problem that never ends,
I am empowered
by the strength that never fails!*

Recovery Toolbox

Who Keeps Us Sober

by Steve S.

How appropriate I believe it is that we close our meetings hand in hand or arm in arm in 'the Lord's prayer!' It reminds us that this is nothing but a *spiritual* program. It calls to mind our dependence upon God for our sobriety. As the story goes, one newcomer once spoke of liking everything about the program and all of its good ideas and principals yet having difficulty with the spiritual part of the program. The answer given him was, "There is not a spiritual 'part' of the program. It is a *spiritual* program."

"The Lord's Prayer" is packed with wonderful spiritual recovery aspects. I would like to share what it means to me in my recovery. This is what comes to my heart while praying this prayer in love with other group members.

In many groups it is the custom to look up at each other around the circle while praying. This is so fitting as so many see other group members as personal expressions of their Higher Power. This was a wonderful suggestion given to me by my sponsor when I was struggling with God issues. He supported me to let the group be my Higher Power. This was my first concept of an acceptable 'Higher Power' while I was making my way back

to terms with God. Now that my understanding of God has expanded it still includes the group members as a loving representation of "HP." Many hear the words and direction of God in group feedback and sharing. When I make contact eye to eye around the circle and give and receive an affirming nod or wink I feel the love of God flowing in and through me.

OUR FATHER...

I experienced childhood without the emotional or actual presence of a father. It is nice to know we have a heavenly Father figure present with us. Yet for me it was hard to relate to that intimacy with God as Father. I appreciate having heard some of our Godly women pray, "Our creator." To me this indicates supremacy, yet still includes intimacy and care.

WHO ART IN HEAVEN...

Some pray this line, "... Who is in Spirit." One program buddy shared with me he prayed "Being of Light, that is within me " I like that! "Yet it is in Him that we do live and breathe."

HALLOWED BE THY NAME...

The concept of 'Holiness' was once given to me as the idea of being 'whole' complete,

Recovery Toolbox

fulfilled. Is it not wonderful how our Higher Power makes us whole through His Grace!?!

THY KINGDOM COME...

"Kingdom" connotes "reigning." This is appropriate for our program's third step prayer. As we give up the care of our lives over to the control of our Higher Power we give Him reign.

THY WILL BE DONE...

Continuing this prayer along the same vein, praying "Not mine but Thine will be done" requires so much trust and surrender it is a frightful prayer for me to pray.

Someone once shared in a meeting "I do not hear the program saying that God is going to do anything in my life. I hear the steps asking me to find '... only the knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.'" God is not going to do His will in my life by force or cause this or that event to happen. I then came to the conclusion that it is not up to God to do His will in my life! It is up to me to find out what that will is and do it to the best of my ability. God does not work His will out in my life! It is up to me to work His will in my life!!

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN...

Often I pray: Wholly is Your Name. Lord quickly come! Your Will be done, In Heaven & Earth the same.

GIVE US THIS DAY...

This phrase reminds us to "Take It Easy" only "One Day At A Time." Let this also be a prayer of gratitude for another day to live in the present.



OUR DAILY BREAD...

Many say "strength." I often add "... strength to do your will." If there is one thing I have come to conclude about God's working in my life is that He does supply the strength and courage to endure His will and suffering in this life.

Bill W. came to this conclusion in his story (page 13 of the Big Book), "When in doubt I was to sit quietly, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me."

This finally came to me while I was sitting, stricken with fear, cuffed in the back seat of a police squad car racing downtown to the county jail. I wanted to end my anger with God and stop blaming. Yet I did not know what to pray. Then it came to me. I remembered how my home group taught me to pray only for the strength just to endure what ever was about to happen. Then I could pray for the

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Twelve Steps

Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

When I was asked to write the reflection for this step, my ego rose to new heights. I desired to do my will and to write the greatest reflection ever told! Seeing this, I was in disbelief about my attitude and asked my higher power for his guidance and love to go through me.

I am a sex addict. I use my sexual addiction to hide from the pain, the hurt, and the hassle of everyday life. I can choose not to deal with anyone or anything, just to act-out sexually. For many years of my life, I lived this way.

Recently, on a trip to my meditation bench, I nearly stepped on a Copperhead snake. That snake was the most beautiful and deadly thing that I've seen that close. I tried to scare it away by throwing sticks and rocks at it,

but the snake did not move - even in immediate danger of death.

I soon realized that the snake had as much right to be there as I did, however deadly it was. I realized the snake symbolized the addict in me - beautiful and deadly. I could not kill the snake any more than I could kill the addict in me because to kill the addict would kill me. And with that I understood that I had to unconditionally love the addict who could destroy my life.

Every morning I have the choice to act-out sexually. I pray and let God in my life and feel his love for me. Every day I have to be willing to let God remove the defects that I am not willing or able to let go of completely. Yet, every time I pray for God's love, a little bit slides out of my grasp.

David S.

A Sobering Prayer...

***Higher Power,
grant us the self affirmation
of knowing, deep down,
that our faults do not make us worthless.***

From Priming the Pump, a pitcher full of prayers for recovering sex addicts

Twelve Traditions

Tradition Six: An SAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

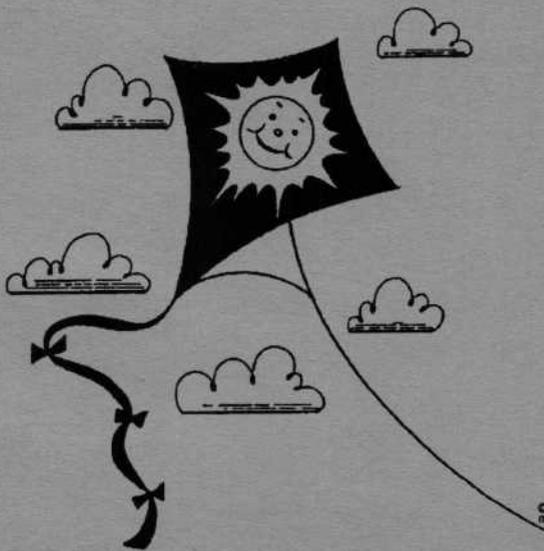
I want to write about what this means to me. I am not a business tycoon, just an everyday kind of man. Never before have I been involved in a program where everyone can just exist and be there. Race, religion, political orientation, societal status - none of these matters. The focus of our meetings is recovery and what that means.

Every month a trusted leader volunteers to show up and lead meetings. Shame has played a large part in this addiction for me. I would find it very easy to run from this program for any judgment, sly remark, or harsh criticism. However, I find I am gladly welcomed to every meeting no matter if I have just slipped or am able to maintain my program with God's help. There is only one common element that is important for me to know: I am a sex addict and in that we are all equals. Not one person

has cornered that market. This program is so open that any man or woman could walk into any meeting and be greeted with genuine love and concern.

I've been to different churches in my neighborhood and I felt very inadequate—that I wasn't saved, dressed neatly enough, or that I arrived too early or late. None of this matters as far as SAA is concerned. I am honored to be a member.

David S.



Feature

Criticism and the Coffeepot, or How I Moved From Judgement to Gratitude

by Steve B.

I'd like to share my Story of the Coffee Pot as I know it could have happened.

It's Monday morning and I'm home because I'm unemployed due to the consequences of my sex addiction. I'm only five weeks into my recovery work and I know that I don't need to run out and find a job right now. I know that being unemployed doesn't mean I don't have work to do. I'm also fortunate that my partner of five years has chosen to stick with me when he could have easily severed our relationship, so I can afford to be at home and work on my recovery rather than pound the pavement looking for a new job.

I'm in the house alone. My partner has already gone to his job, but I have also gotten out of bed, showered and dressed, and feel ready to face my day and my work. I sit in the kitchen eating a silent breakfast, enjoying the sunshine that streams in through the window. It's spring and the silence is broken only by the sound of birds chirping in the backyard.

Then I hear another noise. Click. Tap. What is that? Click. Tap. It sounds like something gently tapping on glass. I recognize the sound and instinctively

look toward the empty glass coffee pot perched in the automatic drip coffee maker. Tap. Tap. It's empty because I don't drink coffee these days. Click. Tap. It's also empty because there hasn't been time to make any coffee or tea—my partner had taken the

Though I have made progress in my recovery, and feel I am beginning to grow along spiritual lines, I am finding judgement and criticism are two major barriers to my growth.

coffee maker to a conference over the weekend and I know it's only been in the house again since the the previous night when he returned. Tap. Tap. These thoughts pass through my mind and I then I realize the tapping noise is the same noise the coffee maker produces as it cheerfully warms the coffee in the coffee pot.

Within a heartbeat I'm up and, like a detective at the scene of the crime, I'm looking for clues. I cautiously place my hand on the glass and, sure enough, the empty pot is quite warm. I glance at the power switch and see that it is, indeed, turned on. I turn it off. The whole unit, made mostly of white plastic, is also quite warm.

Has this thing been plugged in all night? Alarm. Panic. My God, the house could have burned down! Who was the careless idiot who plugged in the coffee maker and left it turned on!? Of course, it had to be my partner. The evidence is irrefutable. I hadn't touched the coffee maker all weekend—it had been at the conference. He was the only one who could have returned the coffee maker to our house, plugged it in, and left it turned on! Why hadn't he been more careful? Now I'm angry. This is so typical of his behavior! Why doesn't he pay attention to details? Why can't he be more careful! Why can't he learn to be more like me!

I know he's at work by now. I feel the urge to call him and let him know that he's left the coffee maker plugged in, empty, all night long, and risked not only our house but our very lives! I pick up the phone, totally unconcerned about anything he might be involved in at work. After all, isn't this the day's top priority!? This was nearly the cause of a major fire, possible loss of life, disaster all around and he is responsible, not me! I'm angry and he needs to know just what he's put me through with his carelessness! It doesn't matter how careless I was in my sex addiction, I've been sober for five weeks and I'm taking my lumps already. He'll never learn if someone doesn't point out the

dangers of his thoughtless behavior, and that someone had best be me since I know better! I'll call him and straighten him out right now.

Well I'm happy to say the story didn't work out this way. It changed just at the point when I had the urge to call him, and I'll tell the real ending to this story a little later on.

I never saw my judgemental and critical nature until I began recovering from my sex addiction. I know I always have the tendency and capacity to want to correct others whenever I feel they are mistaken. I also feel that I correct them in a gentle way, kindly pointing out their errors or mistakes as I perceive them. At other times, when I feel it justified by the gravity of a situation, I am much harsher and less compassionate in my criticism of another, especially my partner of five years.

Though I have made progress in my recovery, and feel I am beginning to grow along spiritual lines, I am finding judgement and criticism are two major barriers to my growth. My judgemental or destructively critical reaction to events or situations frequently leads to anger and resentment. When I get angry, I find I desire to engage in inner circle behavior! Skating so close to the inner circle and my potential loss of sobriety has led

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Feature

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me to examine my judgemental and critical nature before such defects of character rekindle the embers of my addictive fire.

I came to understand these things about myself only two days previous to the Monday of the Coffee Pot Story. In an angry exchange with my partner, I allowed myself to respond to him about a situation while I was still in a spirit of anger. The response only made him angry and his anger made me angry and so on until the next day when I finally realized that I could have responded differently. For me, anger is part of fear, and fear is among those things that keep me from God. When I re-examined the situation that had made me angry, I tried to find out where God went during all of this. That's when I realized that in my anger I hadn't let God in at all! My anger and my ego had shut God out. I hadn't looked for God and instead thought that I had to be the one to fix the situation. The only way I know how to fix things is pretty badly—that's why I could never "fix" my sex addiction. I needed my Higher Power. I needed God to do this work, not my anger!

Now comes the ending of the story as it really happened.

I knew at the moment I allowed myself to be angry about the empty coffee pot, that I didn't want to act while in a spirit of anger. I hoped I could learn from

my previous angry response to my partner. I really didn't want to carry around resentment, or to re-feel the anger. But I needed to feel angry—because I was angry—so I slapped the countertop and released the angry energy rather

The spirit of gratitude seems for me to be a wonderful tool for moving away from anger, and my inner circle, and toward the God-centered serenity that comes from my outer circle.

than holding it in. Once I released it, I stopped looking for someone to blame and started looking for a way I might bring God into this. I recalled the words my sponsor had given me the day before. He pointed out that my anger had wasted a lot of time, time I could have spent in grateful contemplation for all the things God had already given me. Gratitude seemed to be the message here, so I gave it a spin.

What did I have to be grateful for about the coffee pot? Immediately, several things came to mind: the house did not, in fact, burn down!; my God-given gift for paying attention to detail allowed me to hear and recognize the noise from the coffee maker, and I did turn it off; my partner purchased the coffee maker and I have enjoyed using it many times; by not calling my partner at work,

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first time to the God of my weak understanding. And that prayer He answered.

AND FORGIVE OUR TRESPASSES...

A calling begging for Grace from a shame filled, broken person who has hit bottom one too many times. In this prayer we admit our powerlessness over our addiction. "God, have mercy on me."

AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US.

This calls to mind our amends-making step work. I often pray: "As I forgive and amend with those who trespass against me and I them." This prayer, along with the steps, teach me not only to forgive, but also to seek out forgiveness where ever possible. I believe it is my responsibility to seek out amends when

ever I harbor ill feelings toward anybody, group or entity, whether or not I am at fault.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

Some pray, "Deliver us from fear." This prayer calls up the importance of holding to my boundaries. I pray, "Lead me not out of my boundaries, but deliver me from slips." For me, boundaries and slips go hand in hand. When I cross my safe boundaries around my triggers I become powerless and inevitably slip! Strong boundaries are necessary for sobriety!

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM (the control), THE POWER (Higher Power), AND THE GLORY (the gift of recovery) FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.

Keep coming back. It works, if you work it. Cause you are worth it!

Steve S.

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I've spared us a fight which could have ruined the day for both of us—a fight which would cost us more time than it was worth. Now all I wanted to do was call my partner and tell him how grateful I was that he bought the coffee pot! My response had been changed by a spirit of gratitude and my willingness to let it work.

Gratitude! The spirit of gratitude seems for me to be a wonderful tool for moving away

from anger, and my inner circle, and toward the God-centered serenity that comes from my outer circle. Gratitude is certainly a foundation for my outer circle! It moves me away from the judgement and criticism which only feed my anger. And I couldn't have gotten here without God, my sponsor, my Program, and the courage to change the things I can!

Steve B.

Fellowship Forum

Getting It Said In One Minute!

A Report on the 1995 Delegate Convention

by Rich S.

Green light...yellow light...red light! You were given 60 seconds to express your opinion "for" or "against" the motion on the floor and when the red light lit up you had to sit down. Ten lined-up on one side of the microphone, while ten lined up on the other side to represent the opposite view.

In a little more than twenty minutes a broad range of views had been presented from persons across the world, some rather quietly, some passionately, some with humor, but all intensely.

Harry S. of Ann Arbor, the chair of the Board of Trustees, called the discussion to a close and asked for hands of those "in favor," directing them to count off out loud. The final ones called out, "twenty-five," "twenty-six," "twenty-seven," "twenty-eight," (the delegate from London sounding to American ears almost like he had said "fifty-five"). Then the chair called for hands of those opposed. Twenty-eight were "for" and twenty-four "against"—a majority, but not a "consensus," which is considered to be 2/3 to 3/4 of the delegates.

Harry then explained that five minutes were available for any who wished to restate the minority view. Taken from a half-century of AA business experi-

ence, SAA had adopted the practice of respectfully listening again to the minority voice and then taking a re-vote to see if consensus might be reached. To fail consensus meant dropping the item or tabling it for another year and sending it back to committee.

Seeking the guidance of a Higher Power as expressed in a group conscience is not an easy process. With fellowship-wide meetings only once per annum, decisions often take years. Some proposals involving an even distribution of opposing views may never be decided one way or the other.

Five lined up to defend the minority view, to try to persuade others to join them in defeating this proposal. At issue was whether to adopt an Abstinence Statement for the SAA Group Guide which was put forward by the Literature Committee. A young man from Michigan argued that "it was poorly written", and someone from Minnesota said that "it seemed disparaging of the sobriety belief of another 12-step fellowship". A delegate from the East Coast stated that "their group would never use it as is" and a member from the West added that such a statement of the unique beliefs of

Fellowship Forum

the fellowship was too important to be published in a half-baked version. He asked that it be sent back to committee and a better version reintroduced in 1996.

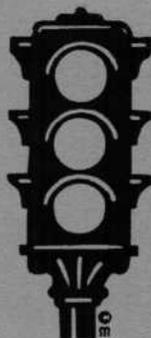
Again the chairman called for a count and this time those in favor were far less and those who preferred that a better-worded version be developed were not only a majority, but a clear consensus of 3/4. The minority voice had not only been heard, but had persuaded the rest. The 1995 Convention had spoken and a very controversial motion was resolved for the moment. Those who had championed it felt their disappointment, but this wasn't about winning or losing. It was about the arduous process necessary to publish a statement which will become useful to 500 autonomous meetings spread across this continent and now three others. It was about the sixty-year-old tenant of the Twelve-Step fellowships that we will journey together in unity despite extreme differences of personal viewpoint.

This 1995 Delegate Convention was quite different from the chaos and impassioned outbursts of former years. The Board had found a simple, more efficient method to conduct business and all nine items of the planned

agenda were completed by 2:00 pm of Day One. That left time for the Board and committees to hear from the fellowship at large. It gave us a chance to learn about needs in Mexico City and Australia, and a new Latin American region was formed. Members in Virginia expressed a need for literature on an issue quite different from the needs brought up by delegates from Texas. There was time for these and a half dozen other matters. There was ample time for the Focus Groups and for Regional Caucuses.

Green light...yellow light...red light. The little home-made device sitting on the table at the front, along with a new procedure, had worked beautifully. SAA came into a new era of business conduct in Ann Arbor. If you've wondered whether it could ever happen, come represent your meeting at the 9th Annual SAA International Convention in Minneapolis in May, 1996.

Rich S., Denver



***Seeking the guidance of a Higher Power
as expressed in a group conscience
is not an easy process.***

Announcements

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 in literature-related work. Connect to the network of people helping to create and distribute recovery literature. Fill out the form below and send it to:

Friends of the Literature Committee,
c/o NSO of SAA, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: (____) _____ - _____ FAX: (____) _____ - _____
E-Mail Address: _____
Intergroup: _____
Do you have a computer? <input type="checkbox"/> MAC <input type="checkbox"/> PC <input type="checkbox"/> Modem?
Friends of the Literature Committee (FOLC)

Some projects we're working on:

- *Plain Brown Rapper*—increase the distribution of the *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 as well as reviewers of material already translated)
- Do you have any ideas for new literature?

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

SUBSCRIBE TO THE *PLAIN BROWN RAPPER*

The *PBR* includes news of the worldwide fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous, stories of recovery, the experience of the fellowship in working the 12 Steps, outreach, service work, and more. The *PBR* is our journal and a vehicle for communication. In its pages, through the shared experience, strength, and hope of our fellowship, we aim to provide gifts for your recovery and serenity. \$12/year (\$18/year outside the U.S.)

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