



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

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PBR Submission Guidelines

With the *PBR* returning to a regular monthly publication schedule, your newsletter is in need of support through contributions of many sorts. The *PBR* publishes original written material (reflective commentary, letters, poems, etc.) and artwork of interest to members of Sex Addicts Anonymous.

Recovery Toolbox: Here we focus on the tools we find useful in recovery. Submissions should be 375 words or less.

Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions: Reflective commentary on our steps and traditions. We match the step and tradition to the month (e.g. Step Five and Tradition Five are published in the May—fifth month—issue). Submissions should be 375 words or less on each step or tradition (750 words or less combined).

Features: Our members stories, experiences, poetry, or other creative efforts. Submissions should be 750 words or less.

On The Topic: Here we focus on a specific topic or area of interest: service work, outreach, tips for meetings, or any other broad topic. Submissions should be 750 words or less.

Fellowship Forum: Your letters, opinions or commentary which you wish to share with the entire fellowship of SAA. Submissions may be of any length but long submissions will be edited as necessary.

Artwork: The *PBR* welcomes black and white line drawings related to aspects of recovery. We especially need illustrations of concepts or topics (such as anonymity, spirituality, connection, prison outreach, etc.).

Guidelines for Submission:

Please type or print all submissions, double spaced. If possible, please submit your work saved as a text-only file on a floppy diskette (3.5 or 5.25) to:

PBR Editor, c/o NSO of SAA,
P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270.

Or send it via e-mail to:
EditorPBR@aol.com.

Please include your first name and last initial, otherwise the submission will be published as 'anonymous.' If you wish, include your mailing address so we may confirm our receipt of your submission.

All contributions become the property of SAA. If you have included your mailing address, you will receive a free issue of the *PBR* in which your submission appears.

In observance of our Sixth Tradition, the PBR does not endorse any outside group or organization.

Steve B., Editor

I Can Recover!

by Richard W.

Writing or talking about my disease has not been easy. Particularly when I am in a "I don't want to recover state of mind". I have been in SAA for over 5 years. I see that I have made progress in these years but I find that something has happened.

Recovery means work. It means reaching out and letting go of the crutches and handlebars of a false way of life. It has been a change in behavior that was easy to talk about but hard to do. Lately, I have started seeing that I talk more than I act. I rationalize a lot of my behavior and this results in a change in thinking. This change is manifested in a reluctance to do anything about my disease.

Friends in the program have started to ask me if I truly want to stop acting out (in any form). I say that I do, but inside I know that I still find the need for my disease bigger than ever. What's happened? Where did my early years of recovery go? Why am I struggling with the decision about giving up something that continues to rob me of my serenity?

My sponsor and friends remind me that I continue to feel the need to hold on to parts of my disease because I'm an addict. As an addict, I use and use and use

until I have no feeling left. I numb myself from the world with the intention of getting more work done. But, in reality, I am just soothing the raw feelings, nerves, anxieties and shame twisting inside me in order to feel satisfied. This reminds me of the commercial that shows a cocaine addict who walks around in circles saying that he uses coke to do more work, so he can make more money, so he can buy more coke, so he can do more work, so he can make more money, so he can buy more coke, so he can do more work... etc., etc., etc. Is this life?!?!?!?

The answer to this is a first step. To admit my powerlessness and my unmanageability to my brothers and sisters and to peel back the layers of denial. A first step is a significant action that is effective at highlighting the truth. However, lately, I have been confounded by a simple question. Why should I get better?

When I first came into recovery, I felt that I was trying to pull myself off of the railroad tracks in order to escape the oncoming train. I did not want to die. I did not want to continue the pain. Life was hurting and I wanted to feel better. I went through the steps. I reached out to others to share my hope, my progress, my joy of recovery. Why do I feel that I am not able to do that now?

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Twelve Steps

Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

I'm Ron G., and I'm a sex addict. The ninth step was the most frightening and life changing action I had ever taken. Of course, the first eight steps allowed me to change in many ways. They were necessary preparation for making meaningful amends. The ninth step for me though was THE step. The action step. The step that showed I really was willing to do anything to recover. It was the work that went with faith.

At first I wanted to complete the step quickly, lightly, and painlessly. Of course that wasn't possible for a meaningful ninth step. Fortunately, my sponsor helped me see that. For the eighth step I had reluctantly made the list of all the people I had harmed. While I made the list, I tried not to think about actually making amends to them. I would have been tempted to skip a few people otherwise. Instead, I made a searching and complete list of people I had definitely harmed and even those people I possibly could have harmed with my addictive behavior. I didn't worry at the time about what the list would lead to.

With the list in hand, I began to meditate, pray, wonder, wish, anticipate, worry, ruminate, dream, and pray some more over

every person I had harmed. At times I was certain I couldn't go through with it. Maybe my wife didn't need to hear everything I had done. Maybe I didn't need to include my parents; I didn't really harm THEM, did I? Did my brothers and sister really need or deserve amends? What about the person I had harmed at work? I didn't even know her name, or where she lived. And besides, wouldn't I really be injuring them by trying to make amends? So what was the point with any of it? I had gotten sober, so why did I need to do the rest of that stuff?

All these doubts loomed large while I desperately and foolishly tried to maintain control of my life and everyone else's. Deep inside, however, I knew that eventually I would have to do it. Then there came a time when I realized I was stuck. I wasn't moving forward anymore. I wasn't growing. Stagnation for me is a dangerous thing. I stopped climbing and started slipping. It wasn't a big slip, of course (or so I thought), just a minor transgression with a sex plan that was obviously too strict (or so I thought). In addition, I also became dissatisfied with my relationships. I was in this twelve-step program and getting therapy, while all my wife was doing was

Twelve Traditions

tolerating my absences and going along with minor changes in my behavior. She wasn't growing! Surely that was the reason I didn't feel connected or close to her. And what about my parents? If only they could believe in God like I did. If only they could admit they were dysfunctional and needed help. If only they could accept responsibility for what their poor parenting skills had caused me to do. I wanted some kind of real relationship with my siblings, but surely they weren't ready for that. And my sponsor, what did he want from me anyway? Why did he think I had a problem with humility? Wasn't I trying to be honest, open, and willing? He just didn't understand where I was coming from. If only everyone else did this or that or the other, I could have meaningful relationships with them.

Eventually, my unhappiness overcame my fear of making amends. I could no longer put it off. Half-measures were availing me nothing. The thing missing in my program and my life was the next step, making amends. With the thoughtful guidance of my sponsor, I began to try to trust God. I knew it was His will for me to be in SAA. So I had to believe that He would take care of me while I worked the steps. Surely He would keep my marriage intact. He wouldn't let me be separated from my kids, would He? The people I loved wouldn't

turn their backs on me, would they? I wouldn't lose my job, would I? My sponsor confronted me with the fact that, yes, God loved me and would make all things work for good if I was faithful; but maybe God's plan was different from my plan. Maybe it was God's will for me to be divorced and estranged from my family. If that was His will, then it would work out to be the best thing for me. I was foolishly praying that he would take care of me and give me what I wanted. I had to come to the point where I would be willing to accept anything and everything that God had planned for me. I had to be prepared to give up everything in order to be truly faithful and make meaningful amends.

My eyes were opened. I began to pray for the people for whom I was to make amends. I prayed that they would be able to be present and hear what I was saying. I prayed that they would have an open and accepting heart. I also prayed that having previously let my resentments go, I could be open, honest, and humble. I prayed that I would be able to talk only about myself and expect nothing in return. God answered these prayers.

My wife was first. I was sick to my stomach the day I made amends to her. I had decided to leave nothing out. I wanted to be completely open and honest

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Feature

Recovery is for Incest Survivors *and* Offenders by Louis W.

I'm 46 years old and I'm also an incest survivor. I survived multiple incest over many years. At the age of seven years old, I was a very innocent and naive boy, when my older brother molested me. My Dad died about eight years ago, but before he died he told me that he 'witnessed' my brother molesting me. When I asked my Dad why he never got us help or counseling, or even stopped what my brother was doing, Dad said he did not want to believe it happened.

So the abuse continued. With three male cousins close to my age who lived on a farm, I experienced many perverted forms of abuse. I was made to strip naked and run through fields, woods, and a briar patch. I was abused in hay forts and lost my underwear. Once, my Uncle and I were feeding the cows and he moved some hay and there in plain sight was a pair of my underwear. I was scared he knew they were mine, but he said nothing, picked them up, and just threw them to one side. Not a word was ever said. There were times I was stripped naked in a barnyard and forced to sit in cow manure and spread it over myself and my cousin would molest me. When he was done, I was made to sit in a cow's watering trough that had

cold and dirty water in it and I had to clean off the manure and get dressed. Back home in the city, I was abused by other kids and adults over those same years, but because I'm writing only about incest (sexual contact with family members), I will leave the others for another time.

Please understand, all this was against my will: it was forced on me. So you might be saying, "Why didn't you talk to someone?" Well I did. I told my Aunt and she took me with her when she asked her son. When he said "no," I got a whipping for 'lying' while he stood by. When she left, he beat me up for telling and laughingly molested me even while my nose was bleeding and said "Now go tell again."

I suffered incest at the hands of my cousins and brother separately from the age of seven until my mother died, when I was twelve years old. Somewhere around the age of nine or ten I gave up trying to stop the abuse. I stopped fighting a losing battle. I allowed the abuse to happen, which turned into a habit. Many of you will know what I mean. I gave you that very small part of what happened to me, so you each will know I have suffered and survived as you have.

So when I say I know your

pain, your anger, your hate, and the feeling of helplessness and being used, you know that I know. How many of you know the feeling of crying out for help, only to be disbelieved. Or the feeling of telling the truth, but only to be beaten up and given a whipping and called a liar? Can you say you also know the feeling of being slapped and pushed around, or being a sex toy, that you were not a person and had no say? Please hear what I have to say, because I'm one of you!

The reason I decided to write this was because of some of the comments made at the (1995 SAA) convention. I was told that the incest workshop had lots of anger and hate. The statement was made "that because of the incest and the effect it has had on their lives and jobs, that they are ruined." And the statement was made that "our offenders (some, not all) are sorry for what they had done," and someone's response was "That is what they always say, just to get away with it." As an incest survivor who suffered at the hands of offenders who pervertedly used me for their selfish pleasure, I would like to give my response to those three statements.

I have just turned 46 years old, and I'm sorry to say I also used these excuses of being molested, and the effects it caused on my life, to give me justification for all my failures in life. I've had

many different jobs, had three wives, the loss of friends and family. I was a miserable person. No one liked being around me. I had all the "right" excuses for not being a successful, well-liked person. "Look at all the perverted abuse I suffered as a child, over those many years." I could not like the person I saw in the mirror, so how could anyone else?

Our group was faced with the fact that among us were not only those who have been offended, but we also had offenders.

But during my 44th year of life, many different circumstances took place in my life, and for the very first time my eyes were opened. I could see the world around me very clearly, but more importantly, I saw the man in the mirror in a new and different way. I started to realize I have a choice in how today is going to be; I have a choice to allow people around me to push my buttons or not. I have the power to set my mood when I awaken in the morning, during the day, and even into the evening. At anytime, if I'm happy or sad, it is because I choose that emotion. The only effect that people, places and things have on me is for me to choose how I'll let it affect me. It is my choice, not theirs!

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Feature

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Yes, I was still molested by my brother when I was seven. Yes, I know my Dad had witnessed my brother abuse me. Yes, my three cousins did a lot of sick and perverted things to me, and yes, I have the added guilt of finally giving in. I stopped fighting and allowed the abuse to occur. Sure, my Aunt gave me a whipping for lying when I knew I told the truth, and of course what else could my cousin do but beat me up for telling? Why should I keep crying about my past? What good has it done for me over 44 years? I feel the only good my past can offer me is for me to use it to help others. It is my choice to take the lemons life had handed me and make lemonade, so I can be a benefit to others rather than a hindrance and drag them down too!

I am a part of a Sex Addicts Anonymous group in Houston, Texas. I'm very lucky that each person has also chosen to make their lives and the lives around them better. The abuse that they suffered, as they have shared with the group, is beyond belief. Not all had an incestuous form of abuse, but the abuse different people have suffered, I'm sure you would agree, is just as devastating. I would be wrong and selfish if I said the abuse I suffered was worse than yours, because then I would not have feelings for your pain. Our group

has moved forward. The love and compassion that is shared can really be seen.

Even though all have suffered unheard of abuse at the hands of their perpetrators, some of those who had been molested in their past have also been offenders. Can you imagine the inner strength it would have taken for someone to stand in your group and share all the abuse that he (or she) has suffered and then to add that they had also offended? Talk about trusting your group! That is total trust. These individuals tearfully explained how "sorry they are that they ever offended, that the anguish they experienced was great. They wish that one of the effects of the abuse they suffered was not being turned into what they hated the most...an offender.

I had hate and anger for those who stole my childhood, who used me selfishly, and there is nothing wrong with expressing that hate or anger, as long as it does not affect and hinder the recovery of another person. When our group was faced with the fact that among us were not only those who have been offended, but we also had offenders, everyone had to make a choice. Were we going to move forward in our own recovery and follow Step 12—to help others who are also seeking recovery—or were we going to continue to cry in our self-pity and stop not only our own

recovery, but the recovery of others?

Yes, there are offenders who do not care what they have done or who they did it to, and will do it again. But there are also some of the offenders who are truly sorry, who wished they never did the things they did, and who want recovery as much (or maybe more) than I do. Should I be so selfish as to not allow those who want to change and be in recovery as much a chance as I have had? I personally have chosen, as have other incest victims who have greatly suffered the effects of that abuse, to accept offenders who want that recovery as I do. In *Christian Counseling Today* magazine, Summer 1994 issue, on page 6, they said, "we must recognize the deep pain in victims of sexual abuse, the guilt and shame (sometimes felt, at other times buried) in many perpetrators, and often a deep remorse and despair in many persons who feel trapped in their addictions, compulsions, sexual orientations, and cycles of repeated failure."

Before I close, let me say that everyone has a right to recover: that goes for the victim, as well as the offender. I cannot be so narrow-minded as to deny anyone the chance to recover. God never told me to judge (only he sits that high), God has only ask me to "forgive others so he (God) can forgive me, because if I cannot forgive others, God cannot forgive

me (Matthew 6:14,15)." For the first time in 44 years, I'm free of the pain of abuse, I can choose to have a great day, and not allow my dark past to affect me the rest of my life. The pain, anger, hate and guilt are still there, but I choose to recover and not be held back by them. I choose to accept God's forgiveness as I forgive others and pardon my abusers.

Those of you who may have made those statements of hurt and anger and hate at the convention, I pray for you to finally release all that excess baggage. It may be holding you back from a recovery that is badly needed. Remember, I've been there, where you are, for 44 years. I suffered as you have and for years had the same exact feelings. I choose to be free, and living in recovery is so much better for me! Now it is your turn to choose.

Your Brother in Recovery,
Louis W.

Twelve Steps

(continued from page 8)

leaving no hidden secrets that would later keep me from being honest. I had everything written down so I would remember everything I needed to reveal.

I could see the pain and sadness on her face as we relived the nightmare that we lived just a few short months before. I felt anxious, ashamed, and relieved at the same time. She said she was expecting worse. She had already suspected the things I had done and feared there would be more. Didn't she understand that I had been unfaithful to her throughout my addicted diseased life? Didn't she believe I had done the sick and subhuman things I said I had done? She said she did, and she forgave me. Just like that. I was mystified. How was that possible? I spent the majority of my life believing I could never divulge these secrets to anyone.

Eventually I was able to tell people in the program, but this was different. I felt I had so much to lose here. I had shown my wife who I really was, and she still loved me. I began to understand that with God, all things were possible. Making amends to her removed a huge roadblock that was stifling our relationship. It has been a slow and inconsistent process since then. Certainly all of our problems weren't solved immediately. It was going to be a rocky ride, but at least we were

finally on the right path.

My siblings were next. I had similar positive experiences with them. It was certainly something new for them to see me humble, honest, and willing to take responsibility for my shortcomings. It allowed some healing and strengthening of our relationships. The doors are still open today.

I felt good about how my ninth step was going and didn't want to push things, so I planned on putting my parents off for a while. God had different plans. Somehow I found myself in a car alone with them, unable to escape for four hours. I resisted the opportunity stubbornly at first, but I soon found myself making amends. I talked openly with my parents for the first time ever. I found in them the capability of being real and honest. I had no idea they could share on that level. It was wonderful. They accepted me with all my defects of character, and even affirmed me. My father gave me his blessing by telling me what he really thought of me. That healing event has allowed me to accept them and love them without reservation.

Today I continue to work on my relationship with them. It is not a natural process by any means, it takes conscious effort on my part. But there is no doubt in my heart that the relationship I enjoy now with my parents is another miracle freely given to me

Twelve Traditions

Tradition Nine: S.A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

by God through the program.

The ninth step was life-changing for me. Making amends wasn't a one time deal, though. My growth is contingent on being humble and willing to make amends daily.

The ninth tradition to me means that we should each take

responsibility for our own personal program, and for the program as a whole. If I give away responsibility to any part of my program, including the necessary organizational functions of the fellowship, then I risk giving away my recovery.

Ron G.

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The answer to all of this is the first step. I am an addict. I will always be an addict. Renewing my commitment to recovery by admitting who I am and where I was and what progress I have made is a fantastic way of reaching out to recovery. I don't have to focus on the shame of my disease. I *do* have to focus on the

truth and undeniable reality of my disease. It is here. It will always be here but it doesn't have to be the source of my life. By focussing on the truth of my progress, examining my behavior and practicing rigorous honesty, I can see, feel, and do something about the situation. I can recover!

Richard W

Sobering Prayer

God, it's time. I feel strong and have more energy now that I have stopped acting out. Thank you. The confusion and the shame and the loneliness really did take the strength out of me.

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

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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