



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

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In This Issue...

2 Recovery Toolbox

A new year begins with the hope found in the Serenity Prayer. We turn over our plans for the new year to our Higher Power and also say goodbye to our addiction.

4 Steps & Traditions

The First Step is often the most difficult, but it also brings with it the first fulfillment of the promises. We are released from much of the power of our addiction when we admit we're powerless over it! Peter, a member from Winnipeg, Canada, shares his First Step.

"My First Step" — a poem by Glenn V.

6 Features

For member Chuck A., the presence of his addiction while driving is like someone riding shotgun. He reminds us that a car can be a triggering environment.

Sometimes our addiction can feel like a monstrous and manipulative creature. Bob R. shares his experience in "Functional Addict/Giant Crab."

Member Glenn G. experienced the presence of his Higher Power in the lonely desolation of a desert's rocky ravine. Sounds like a place we've all been.

The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change

Courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as you do,
This world as it is,
Not as I would have it.

Trusting that you will make all things right
If I surrender to your will.

That I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with you in the next.

★★★

A Good-Bye Letter to My Addiction

by Rochelle L.

I am losing my "Best Friend," compulsive sexual behavior, and I must grieve this loss, so I can pick myself up and go on with my life. I am going to write you a good-bye letter.

When I first learned of this good-bye letter I should write you, I was shocked. How can people feel so emotionally attached to something that doesn't even have a beating heart? Well, now I know. Thinking about the reasons why I chose this lifestyle is very painful. I think you must have believed that our relationship would help me somehow. Even though I have suffered in many ways, I have also experienced some good things.

The best thing I receive from you—touch—I receive a million times. You give me many arms to hold and hug me; I feel safe and secure in them. The rejected and neglected little girl in me is protected in those arms, loved by those kisses, and unconditionally accepted during the most intimate act we humans perform.

You boost my self-esteem when you let me win the favors of men I feel are out of my reach, and by the many admiring looks and smiles I receive from total strangers. I ignore all the embarrassment and humiliation, all the

verbal and emotional abuse I endure. I have no boundaries, no ability at times to say no when I want to. I have no love for myself or respect for my body when I use it in such a demeaning manner. I have had a hard time accepting genuine compliments on my looks, my personality, or my talents without assuming that person wants something more from me.

I allow myself to believe I'll find what I "think" I need if I act out just one more time, and I do, over and over and over. I feel betrayed by you. Do you really not understand that our friendship is going to kill me, sooner rather than later?

Now I realize you don't have my best interests at heart. Maybe you did in the beginning. I keep trying to fill the emptiness in my soul and the irony of it is loving myself will fill it.

Thankfully, I have realized that, and I now know it's not too late for me to start over. My life is worth living and with you I will surely die. I have to let you go. I have so much to gain and absolutely nothing to lose.

I have a new life to live with healthy feelings and healthy pearls of wisdom. I think I'll start today.

Rochelle L.

Steps & Traditions

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over compulsive sexual behavior—that our lives had become unmanageable.

My sexually addictive behavior began in 1969 around the time I married and progressed over 25 years to a catastrophic state of affairs.

My acting out took the form of seeking out men on a promiscuous basis — in parks, saunas, and washrooms. I was never quite sure of my sexual identity and suspect the need to find unavailable men (emotionally) men had something to do with the fact that my father deserted our family when I was about three years old and I was brought up in a female-dominated household.

My marriage was a truly Jekyll and Hyde life. I had three children and by August will also have three grandchildren. I am now 48. Whenever I crept out of the house at night to practice my addiction, I was definitely in the "bubble," caring nothing about the consequences. But after acting out, I always felt terrible guilt and shame as well as fear. My big secret ate at my insides - both emotionally and spiritually. I always vowed "never again" despite my many failed attempts to stop. After a few years, I realized I didn't have sex - sex literally had me. I was compulsive and quite unable to show any freedom of choice.

My wife knew of my bisexual activity five years after we mar-

ried, when I got syphilis. She chose to stay and keep the BIG secret. I always told her that I never acted out to hurt her. It just happened compulsively.

In 1985, my family was overseas and I was lonely. I spent the night at a sauna acting out. When I returned home the next morning, some friends met me near the house. In my absence, it had suffered a major fire, over \$50,000 worth of damage. I had some discomfort trying to explain why I hadn't been home. But even this wake-up call didn't stop the compulsion. I just limited it more.

I had a lot of therapy and managed to control the addiction fairly well but every so often just had to get away and find a male sex partner. These were often people I wouldn't dream of being friends with under normal circumstances. It was a very self-destructive addiction based on some kind of self hatred.

In late 1994, my marriage was in a state of collapse. My addiction had caused me deep depression, anger and a sense of futility. Finally my wife left me and at the same time I was diagnosed as being HIV positive.

It took all of this before I finally realized that I was seriously ill — not physically but emotionally and spiritually. I

(continued on page 11)

PLAIN BROWN RAPPER

My First Step

Stolen kisses, secret stares,
Filled my life as none would dare.

Stamped out promises, melted away,
All my dreams were thrown at bay.

Misty-eyed, with deep regrets,
Darkness encompassed my biggest secrets.

Then, out in the open for all to see,
Does this have to happen? Why me?

I cried and I sobbed, in front of grown men,
Now they all knew my wretched sins.

For decades and decades, I'd held it all in,
Who could have known what was deep within?

Since that day of my first step,
I've felt no shame because I wept.

For even though I felt like dying,
My new friends said, "Keep on trying."

It was my first step that put me on track,
And now my new friends say, "Keep coming back!"

Glenn V.

Feature

Riding Shotgun by Chuck A.

My car was a dangerous place when I was behind the wheel and alone. A switch in my brain seemed to click and a silent dialog began. I've driven down dangerous streets, picked up strangers, parked in alleys, recklessly displayed myself, and then, ultimately, I was arrested: not once, but four times.

I know now that I was not really alone in the car. My addict was perched in the seat next to me hurling orders to my brain. "Turn here," or "What the hell, nothing really changes," and often "Go around the block and just take a look." I listened and obeyed because he was my highest power. But who is my addict?

Because it suited his purpose he kept a low profile. He seemed to know more about my pain than I did, so he offered me release from it. He filled my veins with adrenaline which diluted all reason. He temporarily filled that vacant place within me making it larger in the process. What a wonderful reliable friend he had become. Just he and I in our secret life tooling around the road searching and feeling totally free.

I have to give him credit—he was even better than I at minimizing the non-secret part of my life. The pain, the lies to those close to

me, the feelings of worthlessness, the sad and pitiful demoralization. But he, like all addicts, had a fatal flaw: the drive to self destruction. His goal was the annihilation of the host body he resides in—mine. It is that nature in him that brought me to my bottom. I thank him for that and, yes, I give him credit. But who is he really?

I've come to look upon him as a wild bizarre beast. An untamed animal clawing to survive. Like any wild animal, if you feed him he'll come back again and again. As a wild animal, he'll show no concern for what or who feeds him. He only knows to seize the moment and devour whatever is at hand and available. But I found that if you stop feeding him, he will return less often and eventually may only visit on rare occasions, if only just to check.

It was SAA that helped me come to know him. In order not to be ruled by him I needed to get to know him, to understand him, to accept him and, yes, even to love him. Today, I don't need to know where he came from or how he came to reside in me. It is enough to know that a myriad of elements coming together in my childhood and adolescence gave him substance—a glance, a

fleeting experience, a glimpse, an improper touch, a fear, a misconception. Once formed, he began a gestation period that ultimately gave birth to that "first" experience. That overwhelming rush. It was then that he took on a life of his own. I still don't really know who he is, but I do know he is and I accept his existence.

From my bottom came the hurculean task of deflating this addict. He had tried to destroy in me this thirst for wholeness, and I now had to do "what ever it takes." I learned that there was a way to get out of this prison of addiction. I began to look at him as a wild beast, a spoiled brat hurling orders at me. It was he, while riding shotgun with me, that would say "Don't let that car get ahead of you," "Look there's a hitch-hiker up ahead," "Let's cruise for just 10 more minutes."

My addict was constantly pushing me—driving me. He had no thought of ever getting stopped. I marveled at what a master he was of denial, rationalization, dishonesty, and projection. All he ever thought of was seeking pleasure, and contolling others for self-seeking. He considered himself all-powerful and never allowed any boundaries to his behavior.

My first reaction was, How can I eliminate him? How can I destroy him? If I remove him, I will surely have the spiritual wholeness I thirsted for. This

dream of destruction is a myth—it doesn't happen. I've had to learn to deflate him, to bring him down to size so something else in me can grow. I want to trade higher powers. I want God to ride shotgun. If I can relegate him to the back seat I can cope. And when he gets "restless, irritable and discontent" I can take care of him. I can reassure him that he is still mine and I love him.

My car was a dangerous place when I was behind the wheel and alone.

I am hopeful that, as my inner spirit expands and becomes more a part of me than my addict, I will return to that sense of wholeness. By reducing the size of my addict and increasing the size of my true self, sanity will return to my life. I remember reading once that a man named Eckhart wrote that a soul does not grow by addition but by subtraction. I didn't know then, but I now know what he meant.

I am grateful to the program, the meetings, the phone calls, the retreats, the service to others, and most of all my sponsor. Because of them my car is not as dangerous a place as it once was. I've come to know that I have options. The world outside my windshield does not revolve around me. I no longer fear death.

Chuck A.

Feature

Functional Addict / Giant Crab

by Bob R.

I learned two interesting things at my SAA Group last night. One, that I was a "Functional Sex Addict," and, two, that my addiction acts like a giant mechanical crab, over which I have no power.

First, what does it mean to have been a "Functional Sex Addict?" For me, it meant that I led a double life. I could do my job well, I was a pretty good provider. I thought I was a good and a loving father, even though I had trouble being "present" all the time. I was a pillar of the church, and an upstanding individual in the community. And yet, I acted out sexually on a regular basis, sometimes several times a day. In other words, I could function as a normal person, even though I was a raging sex addict. Thanks to my Higher Power for bringing me to recovery, but also for giving me the energy to do it all and still survive!

Second, what am I trying to express with the "giant mechanical crab" metaphor? The metaphor came to me while a friend was describing his latest "near slip." He told how on the way to his therapy session he passed this walking path where he had acted out occasionally. Immediately, the acting out thoughts came up, and he began to find himself planning—either for a few minutes just before the therapy session or perhaps for a full-blown event after the therapy session. Of course, he'd keep it a big secret. Like a good "recovering sex addict," he didn't act out, and the first thing he told his therapist was about those feelings he had when he passed the walking path, and how he wanted to act out and had even begun to plan to do so secretly. Then he did stop at the walking path after the therapy session.

"It's such a beautiful spot, and it's such a beautiful day," he

*The pull is so enticing that my
rational mind loses its rationality.
I feel I must act out to survive.
I'm powerless!*

told himself. "I deserve to take a short walk. It will be good for me." Luckily, his Higher Power sent him a friend from the SAA program and together they took a very pleasant and healthy walk. Then, just before he left the place, he sat on a bench, alone, and those feelings of acting out seemed to begin to wash over him. Again he didn't act out, going instead to the SAA meeting where he shared this story. He said that he wanted to "come clean." He wanted recovery.

In my "feedback" for my friend, I told him how I could really relate to what he was describing and coupled it with the following experience. On my way to the meeting, I had tried to remember the name of the street exit off the expressway that I was to use. It was frustrating not to have been able to remember it, because I had taken it so often. However, when I got about three or four miles before the exit, where there were no visible signs indicating the street's name, its name just popped into my mind. I said, "Aha! There were clues out there all about the expressway, which triggered my unconscious mind to find the name of the street for my conscious mind."

And this is just how my addict works. There are clues out there, for me, a sex addict, which my conscious mind isn't even aware of, but which my subconscious mind picks up, telling it

that a particular environment calls for acting out. It's then that the giant mechanical crab drops down from some place and engulfs me and makes me want to act out. Once its giant claws are around me, I can feel the rush and that multi-faceted excitement I'll get from acting out. The pull is so enticing that my rational mind loses its rationality. I feel I must act out to survive. I'm powerless!

He didn't act out, going instead to the SAA meeting where he shared this story. He said that he wanted to "come clean." He wanted recovery.

That powerful crab consisted of my terrible shame and guilt which, through recovery, I've begun to shed. Now each day, the crab has less and less power over me, and I can say no. I'm no longer a functional sex addict. I have access to my full human potential.

Thanks to my SAA recovery! I owe it my life, my relationship, my family, and my career.

Bob R.

Feature

The Rocky Ravine

by Glenn G.

The telemarketing supervisor in Tempe, Arizona extended his hand, "Not many get that many sales in their first morning of calls." "It had been easy to sell all those newspaper subscriptions," I thought. As I drove away thought of all the time I had spent using my power and control to convince other people to do things I wanted them to do. It was then I realized that my greatest skills had been polished in child molesting. Over and over, I had convinced my stepdaughter to give in and to suffer the incest she did not need or want. No amount of tears could wash away the I felt and caused. There was nothing I could do to cancel that evil delivery of life's darker side. How could I have done this to the ones I loved the most? Softly, God whispered, "Because you did not love me more than all else".

My mind continued to despair and did not hear. "Worthless user of people, you don't deserve to live!" screamed out my demon. Would I act out in some way and hide from my pain, or entertain the ultimate escape? Again the Holy One called from the mountains in the distance, "Come and experience my power".

I drove eastward until one lonely road beckoned. Five miles

of hard, lumpy dirt and dust, through desert and stream. At last, reaching the Peralta Canyon Trail, I gasped upward at the towering cliffs. "Yes, I can climb there and soar off and dash my pain." I started forward, but a small stream called out from behind. "Come look at my heart before you commence that great climb." Changing direction, I descended into the rocky ravine. Through the thorny catches, water rushed and gurgled as it flowed past my feet. "Touch my coolness and feel my power," it cried once again, "Enter my soothing realm for healing from the prickliness of life."

I walked through the waters, splashing the refreshing water to feel it dripping down my flesh. Walking upstream to where the water plunged over a pile of rocks, I heard the stream cry out, "Dam up my waters if you can, and watch the pool rise." Gladly, like a little child, I gathered rocks and sand, and carefully arranged them to hold back the water and stop its power, and claim it for my own. But as the water rose, it continued to flow over the rocks, in even more places, with now a higher fall. I sat and contemplated the water as it cascaded down on either side of me. Looking up from the noisy water, a new feature of the mountain appeared

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in view. As the low sun cast its warm light on the heights, two gigantic hands of stone, thrusting out above the rest of the mountain, appeared to be held in prayer. Was God using the mountain itself to pray for me?

Just to the right was another stone spire. In the gap, where the water collected, an ancient cactus grew with ten arms stretching to the sky in praise. If that foliage could live such a strong life in that unlikely place, then surely there was a chance for me. I turned my attention to the waters where I sat. They continued to sing, as if to

—speak to me. I listened until I was ready to hear the Lord of Time speak. Softly, the words washed over me, "In time, I will wash away that dam of your control. In time, I make all things new. With the change, I will bring to you both wholeness and life. Let the waters of life sweep over you and cleanse you of your need to control, and enable you to live in true love and gentleness.

With deep gratitude, I returned home.

Glenn spent six months in intense therapy and worked with Sex Addicts Anonymous before being sentenced to six years in prison.

(continued from page 4)

finally found the local chapter of SAA and not a moment too soon.

I've been attending now for six months and have just completed step three. My formal first step was a terrific release of years of tension, shame, and depression. For more than four months, I've been totally celibate—no sex of any kind including masturbation.

Six months ago, I felt totally isolated and totally cut off from God and totally desperate. Now I have many friends in the group and I have regained control not only over my sexuality but over my spirituality too. I attend two churches—one specifically for gays, bi-sexuals, and lesbians.

Spiritual healing will take some time but it is beginning to happen and I definitely do not

feel my life is hopeless. In fact in some ways it's finally just beginning, as I realize how much I missed and how much there still is left to do in life.

My physical health is still basically good, but much more importantly, I've finally begun to get in touch with my spiritual side and with my emotions - long since deadened by the addiction.

One of my greatest pleasures is doing 12-step work, to let others know there is certainly hope and liberty if they'll just make a commitment, join our fellowship and work the steps.

God bless SAA. It offers a peace and sanity that passes all understanding.

Peter
Winnipeg, Canada

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.

| |
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| Name: _____ |
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| 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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