



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

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Recovery Toolbox

Me and My Money by Rich W.

A part of my sexual addiction concerns my personal attitudes about money. I have a high-paying professional career, which was threatened but has so far survived the consequences of my addiction. My unhealthy relationship with money involves in particular my character defects of greed and selfishness.

I am now aware of trans-generational heritage of problems with money within my family; a self-centered abusive grandmother who felt she married beneath her, and a greedy father who always buys the cheapest, sacrificing quality and durability. My brothers are jealous of my money, and I have used this in the past to retain my role of "hero" within my family of origin.

I have a strong work ethic, and became financially self-sufficient early, not entirely out of choice. I'm a good saver and a fair financial planner and wealth-builder. I only learned to be more generous and more attentive to quality over cost through the example set by my soon to be ex-wife. I had far more control over finances than she during our marriage, and the pending financial settlement has been a sobriety-threatening time of anger, resent-



ment and fear of financial insecurity for me.

I have misused my relative position of power, based on economic strength, to attract women with whom I could act out sexually. I grew to like the false serenity of financial success

I have looked to my financial success as a way to feel worthy. I attribute wealth to a feeling of power, potency and legitimacy. I have misused my relative position of power, based on economic strength, to attract women with whom I could act out sexually. I grew to like the false serenity of financial success; overworking, placing too much priority on productivity, and willingly entering the trap of becoming defined by my occupation.

In order to be more healthy, and maintain a solid recovery, I must become more generous with my financial resources, and learn to feel a personal sense of value from within, not based on how much money I have.

Rich W.

We Were Only as Sick as Our Sickest Secrets

by Dale W.

It has been over a year since I last wrote an article for the *PBR*. The first article was my story on feelings, how I had become a sex addict, and my road to recovery.

Today I was reading the January 1995 issue of *PBR*. In it was an article called "Just an Opinion." Several things struck me as I read it. One of them was that "we were only as sick as our sickest secrets." This reminded me of the years I spent trying to follow my faith through religious ideas that told me I was healed or to just confess my sin and all is forgiven.

These ideas were not bad in and of themselves. However, in my sickened state of mind I used them as an excuse to act out my addiction. I could ignore the real issue that I was a sick person that needed more help than cliches could offer. I could confess all day long that I was healed, but I realized every time I would hear on the news another story of someone who has victimized another child, my shamed-based addiction would return in force.

I came to understand after being incarcerated and coming to the SAA program that shame is a tell-tell sign that I still have an addiction. Addictions do not go away by wishing, confessing, or

believing them away. I can never forget that I once victimized others and that if I don't continue to work my program I could victimize others when I am released. Forgiven or not, I must never drop my guard against this addiction.

Yes, there is healing and forgiveness. There is also recovery. There is also hope. I must not forget that recovery is a process and through God's grace I have hope. When I forget this I am in danger of perpetrating another victim and abusing myself.

I appreciate my Christian friends who have stood by me during my time of incarceration. I appreciate more those, Christian or not, who help me remember that I am a sex addict and point out possible blind spots to my acting out again.

The program has been a great vehicle to my recovery, even here in prison. I am allowed to speak out on these issues without feeling condemned by those around me. No other place have I felt I could do this. I praise my God for providing me with hope and recovery in the SAA program.

A Grateful Recovering Sex Addict,
in Prison,
Dale W.

Steps & Traditions

Step Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood God.*

Dear Heavenly Father, This letter is to let You know that I am taking the steps in my belief in You, and what that decision means to me by stating specifically what I'm turning over to Your care.

Turning my will and life over to Your care is not an easy thing for us weak humans to do. Even though I've accepted Your gift of salvation, there are times when I still choose to go my own way, and ignore Your will. When this happens, I feel disconnected from You, and also out of Your protection and care. Even though I know You're always with me, I still can feel abandoned and rejected. Life is now a daily struggle. Things I'm scared of now didn't use to bother me. I still have fears, and need Your assistance daily if I'm to stay sober and in the present.

What I really have to do is trust You as I've never trusted anyone before. I know this is the right thing to do, because You control everything. I realize how I've played God with the events in my life, trying to control my surroundings and others. This caused me great disappointment and frustration. What I need to do is stop being You, and surrender to You wholeheartedly with all aspects of my life. Though difficult, the following are the things I

want to turn over to You. They're too difficult for me to handle alone and I pray that You show me how and guide me to Your will.

***I give You my desire to hold grudges and resentments and ask You to remove them and give me victory over them...
I give You all of me. Physical, emotional, and spiritual.***

My sexual compulsiveness, and all that accompany it (masturbation, pornography, sexualizing, obsessing, foot fetishism, desire to smell clothing). All dysfunction in my life such as drinking excessively, overeating, lying, spending and fantasizing. I also give You the relationships in my life that have been based in selfishness, my self-seeking behavior, my fears, and my recovery program. I give You my desire to hold grudges and resentments and ask You to remove them and give me a victory over them that I cannot attain by my own actions. I give You all of me. Physical, emotional, and spiritual. Please strengthen me with guidance through Your wisdom, and give me the desire to surrender all of my difficulties daily. I also give You my prayer life, and ask that You show me

Steps & Traditions

what to pray for. Please remove all the things which stand in the way of my healing, communicating, forgiving, being patient and tolerant, and humbling myself before You and others. All these, Father, I give to You because in my feeble attempts in trying to make sense out of life, I have instead made a shambles of it.

I honor You and praise You and thank You for bringing me to the point of release and self examination; which is what Steps Two and Three mean to me. Also thank You for the SAA recovery

program. Please allow me to be of help to my brothers and sisters who still suffer; that we may share in the glimmer of hope that only You can bring to lives that have run on self-will. Show me how to be compassionate to others, because I also need Your compassion as I struggle daily with my human desires. Thank You for Your gift of salvation.

Sincerely, Your child
Phillip

Recovery is a journey,



not a destination...

Features

Becoming Willing Again

by Jim H. (aka Jimlim)

I want to tell my story here so that other sex addicts who have suffered the failure and hurt of repeated slips will understand they are not alone. The idea of "spiritual progress not perfection" and the slogan "keep coming back" have been like the hand of God to me in these past 4 years of trying to stay sexually sober: something I could hold on to when the despair and self-hatred, pain and humiliation I have had to face after each slip turned on me to drive me away from recovery.

I began my sexual recovery in Sexaholics Anonymous (SA) in 1990. In SA, I obediently (at least as I saw it at the time) followed the definition of sobriety which means "no sex with self or others outside of a marriage." I accumulated 90 days quickly and sometimes wondered what was wrong with all the guys who couldn't seem to stay sober.

Then, the old insanity returned to me, and I was too defenseless. I slipped while watching TV, and I quickly progressed to a binge. Very soon I found myself breaking the law again (peering into a girls' locker room repeatedly) in my profession, and masturbating to videos again almost every night. I was so disillusioned and overcome by my

addiction that I didn't return to SA for several months. After I finally returned and began working the program in earnest

I accumulated 90 days quickly and sometimes wondered what was wrong with all the guys who couldn't seem to stay sober. Then, the old insanity returned to me, and I was too defenseless.

again, I found myself maintaining sobriety, then slipping after fewer and fewer days: 76 days, 65 days, 44 days, 3 days, 15 days. The length of sobriety kept getting shorter and I kept getting angrier at God, SA, and the 12 Steps because they did not seem to be working. "It works if you work it" was beginning to seem like a sham. All this time I was sinking deeper into despair and hopelessness. Wasn't I working a "good program?" I had a sponsor whom I called. I was going to meetings regularly and on time. I took on service commitments. I read all the literature. I wrote out my 1st Step and shared it with my sponsor, a small group, and then the whole group. Yet I still couldn't stop for any sustained length of time.

Finally, after another slip and a long time "out there," I came back to SA and also started individual and group therapy. By this time I had found out about SAA and, because I had met this new woman, was seriously considering going to SAA. SA would not allow me to make love to my girlfriend even in a committed relationship without having to call it a slip. SA also required me to state how much continuous sobriety I had every time I went to a meeting (at least the meetings I went to). This worked to compound my sense of shame and worthlessness. So I made the switch at the end of the summer of 1992, thanks to a man I met in SA who had been attending SAA meetings. He told me where the SAA meetings were.

Even in SAA, with our "circular sobriety," my struggle continued, but I have found that my time "out there" has been decreasing. Focus on progress, not perfection. Be kind to yourself. Keep coming back no matter what. Hearing my fellow members utter these principles during those dark days gave me enough hope to keep trying.

I grasped another important concept from my therapist. I had just slipped after 6 months abstinence in SAA from my inner circle behavior (mainly, anything illegal, especially indecent liberties and voyeurism, and masturbation to any form of media). I

was again descending into the pit of despair that only leads to more acting out. My therapist pointed out what then seemed a novel idea: why not try focusing on my recovery rather than my slips? Why not focus on how much time I had remained sober rather than wallowing in self-pity about all the time I had "lost?" Why not look at the decreasing time "out there" as a measure of recovery? And finally, why not choose simply to learn from my mistakes?

I am grateful for these suggestions because they help me see the value of the work I have done in recovery. They help me focus on the positive, learn from my mistakes (new boundaries?), and refocus on recovery (outer-circle behavior) after a slip or a near-slip.

Today, it seems that this is a healthier attitude for me to take. All sobriety is valuable!!! Every day free of the merciless obsession, free of dishonest, sex-driven motives, is valuable and precious. That doesn't mean slips are OK or good or "to be desired." But it does mean that my recovery, just like my addiction, can be progressive. It means that my efforts are not in vain. God in His infinite mercy "hath not forsaken me." And it does "work if you work it" (perhaps more slowly for some of us, but that's OK).

In closing, I would like to paraphrase a story my wife (the

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Features

My Story

by Norbert B.

I have been in recovery for more than sixteen months for sexual addiction. In addition to individual and group therapy, I have been going to one or two Twelve-Step meetings every week. Since I acknowledged my addiction, I have experienced feelings at a level that I didn't know existed, and discovered many new feelings.

My addiction took the form of obsessive and compulsive masturbation while fantasizing about men, cruising rest areas and other public places that had rest rooms, picking up male hitch hikers, frequenting all-male movie theaters and peep shows, and phone sex with men.

The most difficult event was sharing my story with my wife of 29 years. At first she was very understanding, but as time went by and I continued to talk about my attraction to men, she was very hurt. It took many tearful conversations before I realized what a devastating blow this was to her. For my part, I was relieved to have this secret finally out in the open.

The more I read and talk about my addiction and my shadow life, I realized that it is closely associated with the sexual abuse that I suffered as a child before my teen years. Even

though I remembered several incidents of my childhood that involved sex with one or more of my brothers, I never considered any of the incidents to be sexual abuse. In therapy I learned differently, and the facts are very clear.

The most difficult event was sharing my story with my wife of 29 years.

I am the youngest of six boys. The brother who abused me the most is eight years older than me. I know all the activity occurred before I was 12. I have not talked to him about it. When I read *Speaking Our Truth*, a book about men who shared their stories of being abused, several comments in the book really hit home to me. At the very beginning I was in tears out of fear of releasing some long held memories, but none came to the surface. I was aroused by some of the explicit references and was concerned about that. But I know that the arousal is physical and automatic, probably reflecting some of what happened to me as a child. What is confusing is that I sought that arousal in my addiction.

"Many men never forget their sexual abuse as boys, or they remember in their minds and forget in their hearts." That struck home for me. I do not remember any feelings connected with my childhood abuse, but I do vividly remember several incidents.

"When a role model is also an abuser in the boys life, an essential part of his identity, formation, of learning how and who he will be as a man, is distorted." Part of me still idolizes my brother, yet we hardly ever see each other or speak to each other. My wife often told me that my childhood reminiscences were negative and she wished I had had a happier childhood. Now she knows why.

This book helped me understand that aspect of my child-

hood. In numbing out the feelings connected with the abuse, I didn't know what were appropriate feelings. My feeling connected with birthdays, Christmas, or out on the beach was fear, or abandonment of some kind. Now I am gratefully using the tools of recovery: reading *Answers in the Heart* and other uplifting books every day, reaching out to fellow addicts, talking to my sponsor, using *Don't Call it Love* and *A Gentle Path* and continuing to go to SAA meetings.

My latest step in recovery involved reclaiming my profession by moving my office—which had been a place for acting out.

Norbert B.
Midland, MI

Obsession by Peter B.

As black as the cavern without light
poised so intimately close to my ear
calls me to the never realized promises
of joy without consequences.

Where does the light come from?

You lie, I cry
and the offended blackness knowing so well
the depth of my longing for the thrill repeats
you don't understand, you can go ahead,
it's yours for the taking, it will be fine.

There will be no guilt.

There will be no remorse.

There will be no pain.

I the blackness do promise and swear.
And so I do it.
And so I die.

Features

(continued from page 6)

woman I mentioned earlier whom I have since married) found in *Healing the Child Within*. It's called "My Autobiography in Five Chapters." It is another spiritual tool I use to help me stay positive even after falling down. It goes something like this:

Chapter One

I walk down a street that has a gaping hole in the center of it. I don't see the hole until it is too late, so I fall in. I don't know how I got here. I don't know where I am. I don't know how long I have been here, nor do I know how to get out. And it certainly isn't my fault.

Chapter Two

I walk down the same street, and I fall into the same hole. I know where I am, but I still don't know how to get out. I don't think it's my fault.

Chapter Three

I walk down the same street again, and I fall into the hole. I know exactly where I am, I have some ideas on how to get out, and I begin to recognize that I have to take some responsibility for getting out.

Chapter Four

I walk down the same street. I walk around the hole.

Chapter Five

I walk down another street.

And so the story allows me to chart the progress of my spirit toward the sunlight of recovery. Today, most of the time I am on Chapters Four and Five. Recently, after another 6 months of sobriety, I had a slip and found myself in the hole. I recognized where I was almost immediately and began to take steps toward sanity (outer circle behavior). The rest I turned over to God. The next morning I was restored to sanity. I doubled up on my phone calls, my writing, and my program reading. I looked closely at my slip and added some new boundaries. I have been sober again now for 11 months at this writing.

Today, I can walk down another street.

Jim H.

Give 'Til It Feels Good!

by Penny K.

We have a saying in our local SAA groups: "Give 'til it feels good." I can

honestly say that before recovery, giving away "my hard-earned money" never felt good. As a matter of fact, nothing felt very good! Now giving feels great even though I'm in worse financial shape than I have ever been.

Actually, I'm in worse financial shape than I ever even imagined. Still, one of the first checks that I write each month is to NSO for my Lifeline Partnership Pledge. If I start to tell myself 'you don't have enough to give away,' or 'just skip this one month' then I think about 'How would my life have been different if I hadn't found SAA?' As much as I may worry about finances now, I know that's nothing to compare with worrying about going to jail, getting AIDS, being institutionalized, dying or the plain misery of 'acting out just one more time.'

Before really getting involved with SAA service work, I used to wonder 'Why do we need an NSO?' What I realized is that my giving to NSO allows sex addicts all over the U.S., and around the world, to become aware that there is such a thing as sex addiction and that there is help. I also realized that having a unifying organization keeps each new



group from having to 'reinvent the wheel' to get started, and it provides a means for existing groups to find out what's working and what isn't in other parts of the country or world. Finally, it provides for a group that same sense of belonging, of not being terminally unique, that the group provides for an individual member. It allows our groups not to isolate.

I encourage each of you to think about 'How would my life have been different without SAA?' and then decide what level of giving feels right for you. Any gift, from a few cents to a couple of hundred dollars a month, is welcome and will be greeted with appreciation and respect. If every member donated 1/2% to 1% of their monthly income, NSO would not have any financial concerns.

I close this message with gratitude to SAA as a whole, and to each of the individual members who make the whole a reality.

In recovery,
Penny K., Treasurer,
NSO Board of Trustees

Announcements

FRIENDS OF THE LITERATURE COMMITTEE (FOLC)

The Literature Committee is made up of elected representatives and alternates 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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