



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

Carrying the message of hope to the sex addict who still suffers.

NOVEMBER 1996

Vol.8, No.11

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Welcome!

New Articles Needed!

The *PBR* is in need of your experience, strength, hope, and articles! Please consider writing a reflective piece on any of the 12 steps or traditions, and how they have helped you in recovery.



How to Send in Letters and Articles

When you're ready to send in your letter or article, spend a minute to go down this checklist:

- Have you included your first name and last initial?
- Have you included your postal or e-mail address?
- If sending an electronic file, is it in on a 3.5" diskette and in Text (ASCII), Word, or WordPerfect format?

Typed Articles No Problem

If you don't have a word processor, or just prefer to send in a typed article, this is not a problem. The current editor, Steve B., has access to a scanner and software which will create an electronic file from your typed manuscript—so type away and send it in!



As Promised

As promised in the last issue, in this issue of the *PBR* you'll find reprints of articles, insight, and experience from the early days of the *PBR* (perhaps before many of us were members of SAA). These articles remain as fresh and vibrant today as when they were printed five or six years ago. And if you were a member of SAA back then, you may read something you had long forgotten but are glad to see again.

The *Plain Brown Rapper* (*PBR*) is published monthly by the International Service Organization of Sex Addicts Anonymous.

The opinions expressed in any article are those of the author and not necessarily those of SAA as a whole. Take what you like and leave the rest.

Subscriptions are available in the United States and Canada for \$12/year in U.S. funds. Subscriptions sent to an overseas address are \$24/year in U.S. funds.

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Send all submissions for publication to the Editor, c/o ISO of SAA. You may also send submissions via e-mail to EditorPBR@aol.com.

Excerpts from the Abstinence Pamphlet

Over the past year, the Literature Committee has coordinated the production of a pamphlet offering guidance on the meaning of abstinence in SAA. The pamphlet will soon be available to all groups. For the next two years, the Committee is soliciting feedback on the pamphlet as part of the process of making it SAA-approved literature. Contact the ISO to order the pamphlet. Thanks to Jeff W. for his work on this pamphlet.

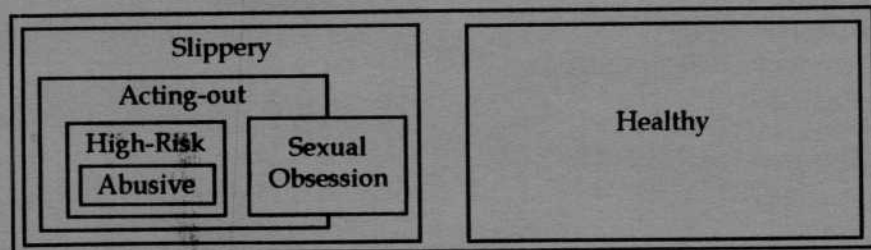
Introduction

In SAA, we use the term abstinence but it may be difficult to know exactly what we mean. The purpose of this pamphlet is to clarify the word abstinence, based on our experience in SAA. In the process we define some of the basic terms we use in the program. The chart below illustrates how we categorize our behaviors.

restricting behaviors that are abusive to others or high-risk to yourself.

We are sexual beings, even as we are abstinent. We strive for healthy sexuality as part of being human, rather than eliminating sex from our lives.

We know that we will continue to have sexual thoughts. We are not concerned about our sexual thoughts



Summary

Abstinence in SAA means not acting-out, achieved through the support of working recovery. Acting-out is any sexual behavior which is abusive, high-risk, painful, costly, or compulsive. Slippery behaviors are anything we do which triggers us. We set boundaries around both our acting-out behavior and our slippery behavior. We change our routines to avoid triggers and use program tools when we become triggered.

With the help of sponsors and other recovering sex addicts, we define our own boundaries. We recommend that you start with boundaries

so long as we let them pass. We call indulging in sexual thoughts sexual obsession. We set boundaries around the sexual obsessions that we consider acting out or slippery behavior.

Consult with your sponsor or experienced fellowship members about defining your boundaries. The Three Circles pamphlet is a helpful guide. Establish your boundaries now; they don't have to be perfect. We revise our boundaries as we grow in recovery.

We support you in your efforts to maintain your abstinence and work toward sobriety. There is no limit to how healthy we can become when we work together.

On the Topic

SAA Unity, not SAA Uniformity

by Ross M.

At a recent meeting I attended, a gentleman told his story. It was a story that moved me to tears no matter how much I relied on any machismo I had to try to hold them back. My shame was playing an old tape to me saying, "real men never cry in public." However, I also knew that I was experiencing a cleansing, for I really felt this man's feelings as though they were my very own.

As the man talked, he less than subtly revealed that he was an evangelical Christian and that Jesus was a part of his Higher Power. Having the same Higher Power myself, I am used to hearing "it" preached in theatrical and imposing ways that turn me off. I didn't feel that this man was doing this. Yes, he might have appeared a bit theatrical, but I felt that his apparent theatrics were simply demonstrative expressions of a real intimacy he has come to have with his Higher Power. These expressions he shared revealed a closeness that he wanted to feel.

After the meeting a few people gathered behind the man's back to talk about what he said. As I listened to them I heard what I perceived to be anger and judgment. They appeared angry that the man was "preaching,"

If we don't have the same Higher Power as the speaker, can't we at least appreciate that person's recovery as spectators? Can't we learn to develop an intimacy with our own Higher Power from one talking about developing an intimacy with a different Higher Power?

because he referred to a Higher Power that they felt represented a 2000-year-old "shame-based organized religion." They appeared uncomfortable and seemed to feel that "boundaries should be set" to prevent future speakers from talking about religion instead of spirituality." They even talked about confronting the speaker about what he said later on.

In telling his story, the man talked about being picked on as a kid, a feeling that I identified with a lot. What I saw after the meeting was a rerun. I felt picked on along with the man and felt hurt and angry. A story that helped my healing progress was slashed in a more critical way than any Siskel and Ebert "two thumbs down" movie review.

In evangelical circles, I have often heard fellow Christians "throw the baby out with the bath

water" in their refusal to appreciate possible truths from other points of view. I have seen an "us vs. them" mentality that was an obstacle to me developing my intimacy with the Higher Power they preached. What I sensed after the recent meeting was a reverse fundamentalism with the same "us vs. them" mentality, in this case "spiritual vs. religious."

If we don't have the same Higher Power as the speaker, can't we at least appreciate that person's recovery as spectators? Can't we learn to develop an intimacy with our own Higher Power from one talking about developing an intimacy with a different Higher Power? SAA unity is not the same thing as SAA uniformity. "Religion" is just as acceptable a form of spirituality as any other. A speaker adhering to it as a part of his/her spiritual program ought to be freely allowed to talk about it without being censored for "preaching."

Whether or not we "have issues" with "religion," we need to emphasize cheering-on the recovery of the speaker in order to enhance SAA unity. After all, we grow in our own personal recovery, in some mysterious way, by doing so.

Ross M.,
San Diego

reprinted from the PBR February 1992



Living ^{in the} Light 97



The Tenth Annual SAA

International Convention



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USA



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Features

Spirituality & SAA: Devotion

By Doug E.

For many of us, our lives are empty and filled with pain and uncertainty. We act out seeking relief from the pain, the rejection, the loneliness, and the anger of wanting to succeed with our lives, yet we know that we have become our own worst enemy in this endeavor. Betrayed by ourselves time and again, we live like prisoners in an existence filled with silenced rage. We hurt ourselves over and over, mistakenly thinking that someday the pain will either bring us love or enough despair to help us end the pain completely. Left to our own devices, we are truly hopeless people who feel abandoned by even the most sacred of causes.

But then came our program, and the rules that bound us turned into promises that could free us. The love of other people gradually replaced the jailer we kept inside us. Loneliness was exchanged for phone calls, lunches and special trips or events with trusted friends. Slowly, we began to own our problems honestly, and the power of denial was broken. Without denial, despair could no longer fill us. Our friends taught us that we were children of God who were not bad, only misguided. In their love we discovered our worth and soon claimed it as our own, a

reprinted from the PBR January 1992

In our joy and hope we turned to the sacred within us, only to find a loving and gracious God—with arms outstretched—saying "Welcome Home."

wonderful and glorious start towards a new life, a new purpose. In our joy and hope we turned to the sacred within us, only to find a loving and gracious God—with arms outstretched—saying "Welcome Home."

And home is here—with our brothers and sisters, who listen to our stories, bind up our wounds, give us hope to face another day, and remind us each week that we are good people. In their love we discover our goodness; in their support we overcome the strangeness of calling ourselves good. We have fought so long to keep ourselves bad, we can hardly believe that we are good, lovable people. Yet look around tonight; is there anyone here who condemns you? Is there anyone here better than you? Is there anyone here who denies your right to be here, or thinks themselves better than you? In every face there is understanding, in every eye welcome. We are family—a new family of trust and kindness. Together, God works the miracle of love that bring us serenity.

Doug E.

How Do You Think of God?

author unknown

At first I saw God as my observer, my judge, keeping track of the things I did wrong, so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die. I was out there sort of like the president. I recognized his picture when I saw it but I didn't really know him.

But later on when I recognized my Higher Power, it seemed as though life was rather like a bike ride, but it was a tandem bike, and I noticed that God was in the back helping me pedal.

I don't know just when it was that He suggested we change places, but life has not been the same since, life with my Higher Power, that is. God makes life exciting!

When I had control, I knew the way. It was rather boring but predictable. It was the shortest distance between two points.

But when He took the lead, He knew delightful long cuts, up mountains, and through rocky places and at breakneck speeds; it was all I could do to hang on!!! Even though it looked like madness, He said "Pedal!"

I worried and was anxious and asked, "Where are you taking me?" He laughed and didn't answer, and I started to learn to trust

I forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure. And when I'd say "I'm scared," He'd lean back and touch my hand.

He took me to people with gifts that I needed, gifts of healing, acceptance and joy. They gave me their gifts to take on my journey, our journey, God's and mine.

And we were off again. He said, "Give the gifts away; they're extra baggage, too much weight" So I did, to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received, and still our burden was light

I did not trust Him at first, in control of my life. I thought He'd wreck it But He knows bike secrets, knows how to make it bend to take sharp corners, jump to clear high rocks, fly to shorten scary passages.

And I am learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places, and I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my delightful, constant companion, my Higher Power.

And when I'm sure I just can't do anymore,
He just smiles and says..."pedal."

reprinted from the PBR April 1989

Fellowship Forum

Dear fellow SAA members,

When the NSO was first formed I found myself elected onto its first Board at a convention in Houston that I never attended (my only missed convention so far). I was not only honored by my region to be so elected, but I was blessed to serve with a few that I recall as "great souls." Those first two years were wonderful, creative times.

With my third year on the Board I was elected its chair, and soon a few individuals in the Twin Cities became intent on forcing me off, in part because of my support for interfellowship dialogue. Rumors were spread that could not easily or quickly be dispelled, so I resigned, as a Trusted Servant needs to be trusted, and in the atmosphere here at that time I could not see how any trust was possible. I knew that if I was not the cause of the troubles, the troubles would not disappear if I left. If I were the problem, they would.

The difficulties did not go away. Eventually the Board was forced to make personnel changes and move the office from Minneapolis to Houston. That was an extremely trying time for our fellowship, and terribly painful for me. A great debt is owed by all to Kevin K. of Houston, then-Chair of the Board, Robert S., the new occupant of my old seat, and Harry S., past Chair, for services

they rendered under tremendous opposition and vilification from a few. Not to mention how capably the friends in Houston picked up the pieces.

Two conventions ago I was again asked to serve in my old seat. Because of what had transpired only a few years before, I said I would not, unless every single delegate there wanted me to. I thought that would be an easy out, but I found myself again on the Board. This, in spite of having explained to the delegates that I was having trouble with depression and did not know how well or long I could serve.

Events now dictate that I again turn in my resignation prior to the completion of my term. I have run through most all the medications on the market, and electroconvulsive therapy is the only real option left me. ECT always involves memory loss to some degree, and always leaves a person going through it confused and disoriented for a time. ECT will take me off my job for about two months, and that will leave me without any possibility of attending the Board meetings in Houston prior to the Convention. The fellowship and the North Central Region deserve far more from a Board member than I can now give. Hence I resign from the Board of the ISO.

At the last convention Dave B. of Fargo, ND was elected the alternate for my region, as the

Fellowship Forum

prior alternate had moved out of the area. Dave B. offered the delegates present an impressive list of reasons why those assembled should be confident with him on the Board. I know I will. North Dakota had more delegates gathered at that caucus than did Minnesota, even though it was held in Minneapolis. So to you up there, help him now.

I want to ask all to give Dave the support he will need. I know from experience what it is like to have it, and what it is like not to

have it. You can help him do our region proud. I also want to thank those people who regained their trust in me and asked me to serve again. I was honored, and am sorry I could not carry that honor to the completion of my term. And to all those of you who, like me, are convention regulars, I'll miss seeing you ever so much in Houston. You have become like family.

John B.,
North Central Region
November 2, 1996

I met, as chance, late in the night

I met, as chance, late in the night
a compulsion, causing me to exceed
the boundaries I had drawn for me.
T'were reactive changes, indeed.
I eyed the source of this basic trigger
my knees growing shaky and weak.
the feel in my depths grew bigger and bigger
as my addict hit it's main streak.
I surveyed the scene, so to keep my sheet clean
for police and officials meant fear.
Then I turned my head on to the victim anon
and decided 'it's safe to be here.'
Not caring at all, whom I hurt in my fall
my breath coming harder in it's lust
and though well hidden, doing what was forbidden
I jumped, hearing footfalls in the dust.
I cried to nowhere, 'Why is this?', in despair
'that I am hurting, reacting this hour?'
And a voice returned, in my ears and head burned
'You did not, first, look to your Higher Power.'
I kneeled and prayed, 'I wish I'd stayed,
within those boundaries and bases I'd set.'
Now, here in my cell, it sure is Hell,
but with my H.P., I'm not *there* yet!

May 11, 1996
EGDII

Fellowship Forum

Interfellowship Fellowship: An Attainable Goal?

A letter to the fellowship from Mark N.

On November 16 and 17, 1996, at Chicago, Illinois, an Interfellowship Dialogue took place between the four largest Twelve Step Sexual Addiction Recovery Fellowships. The fellowships which participated were: Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA); Sexaholics Anonymous (SA); Sexual Compulsives Anonymous (SCA); and, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA). SCA was the host fellowship for the conference.

As a direct result of the conference, a series of recommendations were drafted and approved by all four fellowships' representatives, and will be sent on to the Boards of Trustees of all four fellowships', for each fellowships' Board to consider for approval. All of these proposals were made with the hope that they will, if implemented, to better serve the addicts who still suffer. Some of these are: Maintaining common meeting lists-, Listing other fellowships on our homepages; sharing information on subjects that affect all of us, such as the question of minors attending meetings, and a number of others, which will be identified after the SAA Board has had an opportunity to study them.

None of the proposals included in any way any idea,

desire, hope or prayer that somehow, some way, we could form one fellowship out of the four. What was apparent to all at the conference was the desire of all fellowships present to maintain their autonomy and identity, while at the same time drawing on other fellowships Experience, Strength, and Hope as we consider the many challenges that all of the S-fellowships face. All of these fellowships have a different philosophy that makes each unique, but all of these fellowships use the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as their guide to Recovery, and all of these fellowships are 90% alike, We walk the same walk through our addictive behaviors; we jump off the same cliff when we attend our first step meeting; and, we feel the same gratitude and love for our fellowship that saved, and improves our lives, lives that once were right on the edge of self destruction, and totally unmanageable. We, as members of these fellowships, share our most private thoughts and feelings with a very brave and unique, even enlightened group of people. Should we not honor them all, regardless of their fellowship affiliation?

Sadly, the history of the S-fellowships relations have often

Fellowship Forum

been something like warfare, rather than friendship. It seems to be a flaw in many sex addicts that we will entertain any notion, no matter how trivial or absurd, if it shifts the focus off of ourselves. This is never more apparent than when individuals of one S-fellowship criticize or critique another S-fellowship, one that they often have had little, and in some cases no, contact. All of the twelve step S-fellowships have been victimized by this type of defamation, and all have been guilty of it as well. This has been our common past. Isn't it interesting that so many of our people have tended to isolate themselves, and that each of our fellowships have done the same?

The Chicago conference marked the first time that SAA, SA, SCA, and SLAA have sat at the same table together. The meetings were productive, upbeat, positive, and just not long enough for all the things we wished to talk about. We hope to meet again next year, and continue to meet and share yearly. I wish to note the contributions of two of our fellowship members, Rich S. of Colorado, and John B. of Minnesota, without their contributions I don't feel this would have happened. Much of the groundwork for the spirit of Interfellowship dialogue was laid by these two dedicated gentlemen, and we are in their debt.

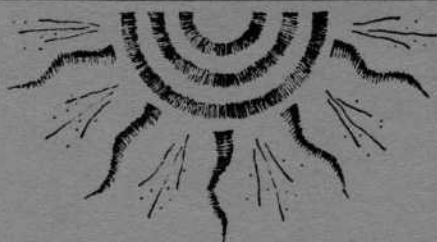
As we walk our Recovery walk, we need our fellow group

members support, our sponsors honesty, and the love of our fellowship to Recover. We are enriched by their sharing with us; Some become our closest friends. As S-fellowships, I hope that we are becoming closer friends, because we are all on the same path to Recovery. I believe that as a fellowship we are maturing (We're just nineteen years old, you know) and part of any maturation process is learning how to get along with people who are different from you. One of my dreams is to see the S-fellowship bickering and criticism end, and for all of us to learn that, as members of all our fellowships, we are all people of value.

I would like to conclude with a suggestion to all: many groups, Intergroups, and in some cases multiple fellowships schedule retreats for their membership. While this is not an original thought, and in fact is already being done successfully all around the U.S., I encourage any and all to invite other S-fellowships along on your retreats. This will give you a perfect opportunity to learn something about other fellowships, and as long as no one tries to change anyone else's mind regarding their own fellowship, I predict you will be gratified by the results; and if for some reason you still find some sense of competition between you, well - Play Volleyball!!

Yours in Recovery,
Mark N.

Announcements



Call for Presenters

Living in the Light: The 1997 SAA International Convention

If you are interested in leading a workshop, seminar, or speaking at the upcoming SAA International Convention, please contact the Living in the Light Program Committee. For more information and to receive a presenter's application:

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