



Plain Brown Rapper

THE SAA NEWSLETTER

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

DECEMBER 1996

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In This Issue...

3 Recovery Toolbox

Acting the Steps

Working the Steps gives us the experience of a higher and deeper power – the power which heals us.

5 Features

Coming Home, by Ginger

A message of gratitude to the fellowship reveals how much is available to us in recovery.

Sponsorship: How It Works, by Bill D.

The lessons of sponsorship; connecting with the lives of others; and how nothing happens by mistake.

10 Fellowship Forum

Thought for the Month: Fellowship

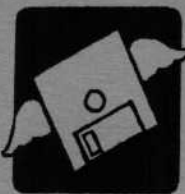
It is not only who and what we are, but also how we live.



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.

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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.

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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.

Acting the Steps Anonymous

It's important when sponsoring someone to have taken at least one Step ahead of the newcomer.

I found out the hard way how much I needed to have already taken my own steps ahead of assisting another sex addict.

Page 96 of the AA Big Book chapter "Working with Others," suggests we let a new comer to SAA know we are "available if he wishes to make a decision" (to me, this means the Third Step decision) "and tell his story" (to me, this is the Fifth Step confession a newcomer will be doing).

Although I had completed the steps and was working them in another 12-step fellowship, and had two-and-a-half years within my inner circle in SAA, I had not gone past the First Step in SAA, in the formal meaning of consciously taken the steps. I had done Step One in the book, *Gentle Paths*.

In my eagerness to carry the message that the 12 steps work, (the twelfth step), I only took a half-measure regarding SAA's steps. I was interested in taking them, but I wasn't active. Such a casual approach to the SAA program of action backfired on me when I began reading a newcomer's *Hope and Recover* workbook on Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3.

My sex addiction became as cunning, baffling and powerful as ever. It suddenly overpowered my tentative good intentions to work the SAA steps, and Iaced out one of my inner circle behaviors before I even knew what I was doing.

I know I need the defense of taking the steps to experience the higher and deeper power that heals my soul sickness...

Just as I had done three years before, I rampaged over the healthy spiritual boundaries of faith and trust one of my male friends place in me. I was too sick to care and I simply, desperately, wanted relief for my painful character defect (in this case my C.D. was my old, old hysteria of neurotic fear and tension in the situation of my friend guiding me in some spiritual healing-bubble-work. I was hysterical to plan to allow this friend to guide me).

Without an adequately prepared conscious contact with a Higher Power with respect to my powerful sexual compulsion, I had no defense against the first action. Result: I must give back to SAA my beautiful two-year coin and take a new inner circle

(continued on next page)

Recovery Toolbox

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boundary date of today (July 29, 1996).

There's good news, however. I did not put any outside addiction substance in my body, so I still have my six and a half years sobriety date in the other fellowship I mentioned above. (I think it's because I'm working all twelve steps in it daily). I know also that I haven't lost my time in SAA, only my boundary date. And, I know I need the defense of taking the steps to experience the higher and deeper power that heals my soul sickness and thus makes acting out something I could not do even if I would!

I hope my experience and strength are useful to *Plain Brown Rapper* readers. God's promises do come true. My part is the honesty, open-mindedness and willingness (which to me are the three elements of the attitude of humility) and the work suggested in the 12-step program of action. Now my motto is:

Start Acting The Steps
To Stop Acting Sick

Anonymous
Portland, Oregon

Sobering Thought:

No where in the Big Book does it ever say that by working the 12 Steps our lives will become manageable by us.



Living ^{in the}
Light '97



The Tenth Annual SAA International Convention



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USA



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Coming Home by Ginger

My dear Brothers and Sisters, I first want to thank you for a home for a peace to come when there was no peace left to go.

I want to thank you for a place to come when all lost hope in me, and no one else wanted me. You have given me a place that is safe to share my loneliness, my fears, my happiness, my sorrow, my shame, my quiet, and you've continued to love and accept me.

I thank you for holding my hand when I needed to cry, for handing me some tough love and truth when I was feeling pity for myself and wanted to run.

Thank you for showing me that life and recovery is a process of ups and downs, ins and outs. You are teaching me to flow with them one day at a time.

Thank you for showing me a God who loved and understood me long before I could accept it. Because of your love, I have accepted God's love.

Thank you for teaching me about the phone. You helped me to pick it up and call you when I wanted to hide or had fears of acting out. Talking to you gave me the hope to go one more day.

Thank you for showing me that no matter how I feel today, I would not die from it nor did I need to act out in any way to

reprinted from the PBR January 1991

escape the feelings. You taught me that "this, too, shall pass" and I could and did live through it with love and support from you and my God.

Thank you for showing me that there is not always an answer to the questions nor is there always solutions to all problems. But acceptance is the key to all things.

Thank you for the acceptance you had from the start. Because of it I am learning to accept myself and know that I am a good person who is lovable and capable of loving.

Thank you for telling me I no longer had to be perfect and continue to fail trying; that all I had to do was to put my best effort in what I was doing and accept that as my best for today.

Thank you for teaching me that pain was one of my best teachers; that in the pain I grew and became stronger.

Thank you for showing me that I didn't have to do everything in one day, for I had the rest of my life to do it; that you'd always be there to help.

Thank you for showing me I didn't need constant approval

(continued on page 8)

Features

Sponsorship: How It Works

by Bill D.

About five years ago John (*From Shame to Grace - "Beyond My Wildest Dreams"*) walked into our Friday noon meeting (Acceptance). A great gift was to unfold. After a few weeks or so he asked me to be his sponsor. I accepted with some timidity. At the time I was abstinent from my bottom line behavior and had been in SAA about three years. John had been in AA and was sober from alcohol and drugs about seven years at the time. He was well established in AA tradition and very familiar with THAT BOOK - *Alcoholics Anonymous*. I was intimidated. As it turns out, John struggled with sobriety while in New Orleans. It took moving to Omaha and starting a fellowship there that brought it about—something I know he and the men in Omaha are grateful for.

I didn't feel at the time that I really knew the "big book" too well. I had read it a few times up to that point. I had my favorite things: "Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict" pg. 449, the Promises, that part about the Actor and the Play in "How it Works." The Big Book was very important to me, for it was there that I first came into contact with *hope*. Before I came to SAA, I went to see my wife's therapist. She had gone to

see him after going through a period of depression following the disclosure of my acting out. He told me he thought I might be a sex addict and sent me home with a copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Within a few days I had read the whole book. I knew those men and women. I cried as I realized that if they could get help I could to.

You don't have to solve everything today, you can just sit with it. You are just where you are supposed to be. Nothing happens in his worked by mistake.

John and I had an interesting relationship. John would ask me something, I would recount my own experience. I would ask him what the "Big Book" said about that. He would give me "His" answer. It was great. I learned so much. But in reality, it was just the wetting of my appetite and the push I needed to move on in recovery. I am so grateful John was brought into my life. Up to that point I was homophobic. I still find it humorous for a guy who acted out with men to be homophobic—humorous but not surprising at all. John helped me accept so many things about myself.

One day John and another friend told me they were HIV positive. A whole new world was to await me. I got scared and we talked about this. I learned much about this disease. They promised not to give up on me if I got stupid or lacked understanding. I learned so much of how this disease affects their every breath. One night I had a dream. I was at a funeral for one of these two friends. In the dream I was talking at the funeral about how much this man had meant to me and how much I loved him. I remember waking up crying and in that semi-conscious state becoming very much aware of how important it was to let them know how much they meant to me—while they were alive. That was the beginning of a wonderful thing for me and it has extended to so many aspects of my life and to so many relationships.

Today I make amends to those I don't know that I used for my own self-centered purposes by serving them through volunteer work with the NO/AIDS Task Force. I have delivered lunches to those with AIDS and today I pre- and post-test counsel. This also gives me the opportunity to do some 12 Step work.



John is presently in a hospital in N.J. He has AIDS and has had many bouts with death in the last few years. He has had a collapsed lung for over three weeks. He is really sick in body. He has Neuropathy and this makes his life very painful. His lung came back about a week-and-a-half ago, then collapsed again. He has had this tube in his chest all this time but for a few days and was in much pain and quite discouraged. I was on the phone with him. A few days earlier I was talking with one of the young men I sponsor about some confusion I was having in my relationship (my wife and I are in marital therapy—you know what that can do). He told me to sit back, take a few breaths. "You don't have to solve everything today, you can just sit with it. You are just where you are supposed to be. Nothing happens in his worked by mistake. We are just actors in the play. We don't even know how the play is to come out." (I wonder where he heard that?).

So there I was talking to John, hearing his pain and discouragement. He was real down. He had called me. I kept quiet a few

(continued on page 9)

Features

(continued from page 5)

from you to be okay with myself; that if God and I approved of me, that was enough.

Thank you for showing me a way to find healthy sexuality for myself; that no one person could tell another what was healthy or not; that we give each other the right of dignity of choice with no control or demands, just love and support to explore and experience and be responsible for ourselves.

Thank you for helping me to believe I had rights and to set good boundaries that weren't selfish or self-centered; to always have respect for your rights and boundaries.

Thank you for giving me time for it has been my biggest healer. To keep myself helping others helps myself and we both grow in time.

Thank you for showing me that there is not always an answer to the questions nor is there always solutions to all problems. But acceptance is the key to all things.

I want to thank you the most for giving me enough self-love to begin to take a risk at moving into a relationship and find freedom to be myself as well as allowing freedom for the other person. Today I know what true love and true forgiveness is, but most of all I know how to share that with another in freedom.

Thank you for helping me find myself and to begin to live and love without fear, shame, guilt, demand, or control.

Ginger

OUR

— **experience** gives us

strength

and together, we build

hope —————

*share your recovery
write for the PBR*

(continued from page 7)

minutes. I then had this pull to say something. It went something like this. "I know this sounds so trite at this moment to say this, John, but nothing happens in this world by mistake. Everything is just the way it is supposed to be. We are only actors in the play. We just live to show His Power, His Love, His Way of Life." There was silence on the phone. My mind was doing its usual contortions trying to figure out if I had said the right or wrong thing. I could sense John trying to collect himself. It felt as if I was right there with him. He said: "Thank you, Bill. I knew if I called you, you would tell me that. I needed that. I have been telling myself that and needed to hear it from you."

John had just returned from Israel and while there he and his partner had gone to the "Wailing Wall". There are these cracks in the wall where people leave their petitions. John said he wrote down his requests. His first was for a return to health. The he asked God to bless those who had supported him in his life and had cared for him and loved him. He told me that as he put his petition in the crack he was thinking of me. I thanked him.

When I got off the phone I cried and thanked my Higher Power for having placed this man in my life. I thanked Him for my recovery. Only because of this gift of recovery do I experience these things in my life today. This kind of connection with another human being — this level of intimacy — makes everything in my life worthwhile.

Bill D.

Postscript:

August 16, 1996

Steve,

I just wrote you that little piece: Sponsorship - How it Works.

Just thought I would inform you that my friend John A. died on 8/12/96. I feel honored to have been his friend and to have had the spiritual experiences I have had with him. As you know, he died as a consequence of his addiction — the ultimate price for us in SAA.

I guess you have read his story in "From Shame to Grace".

Hope your day is going as well as mine. Going to be with my friends in recovery in about an hour at our 12:10 meeting. Then we will go out to lunch.

Bill



Fellowship Forum

Thought for the Month: Fellowship

I recently attended a Bible study where the topic was fellowship. "Aha! " I thought, "I belong to a great fellowship! I surely can add much to the wisdom of this study!" As so often happens, what mostly came out of the study was a reminder of how not so great my own participation in fellowship in SAA is. (Isn't there one thing I can claim perfection in??!!) Now don't get me wrong ... SAA is a special fellowship of men and women who share a common affliction — and a common hope. And some individuals give much to the fellowship and its growth. But when looking at a true example of fellowship as practiced a few thousand years ago, my own expertise as a "fellow" kind of falls short ... and so do many others in our fellowship. Let's look at what fellowship can be and sometimes is:

1. To fellowship is to share a common bond with others. In SAA, our common bond is pain, shame, powerlessness, grace, hope, sobriety, peace, and joy. No matter where we are on the spectrum, others have been or are at the same place, and can identify with us and we with them.

2. To fellowship is to reveal ourselves as who we really are. Because our vulnerability is there for others to see, we no longer need to hide from others, nor be dishonest of where we're at or what we've done. The best part is that we get back grace, love, and acceptance ... something we've longed for all our lives.

3. To fellowship is to give of ourselves to others and this program. When we are Twelfth-Stepped, another human being is reaching out his or her hand of deliverance to us. When we listen on the phone or when we drive to another's house to be with them in their need, we are helping to serve God's goal for them of breaking the cycle of their addiction. When we volunteer our time for office or outreach work, we are shining a light in the darkness of despair. And when N.S.O. receives gifts from the fellowship, those gifts help expand the program — directly or indirectly — to other afflicted souls and literally can save lives in the process.

4. To fellowship is to love one another. Fellowship can be watching a football game together, but should also be much more. To listen, share, hug, cry, or be honest takes love. And, as

- 1. To fellowship is to share a common bond with others.*
- 2. To fellowship is to reveal ourselves as who we really are.*
- 3. To fellowship is to give of ourselves to others and this program.*
- 4. To fellowship is to love one another.*



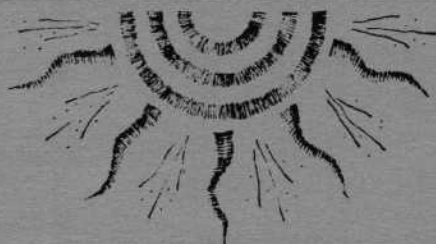
much as we need to rely upon God, as we understand God, to come into the light of sobriety, we also need to ask that we be granted those special human gifts that say to another, "I love you."

So I am faced with a big task. I ask, "How can I hope to attain such fellowship?" And then I hear like a gentle breeze at my back the words, "Progress, not perfection."

Are you truly participating in fellowship as you could, or is your sharing falling a bit short? If you're not sure, come with me. I know this place down the road that serves up a great ham on rye and we can talk and share and learn ... if you have the time.

Anonymous

Announcements



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