

The Plain Brown Rapper

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Using the Gifts of the Program in the Business of Life

By Raymond B.

Since I joined the program two years ago, I have been able to count my blessings. My life has improved in all aspects. Not only do I not have the same addictive urges and behaviors, but I have become more confident and resourceful in how I deal with many other aspects of my life. Recently, I have been struggling with personal responsibility and how my behavior influences the relationships in my life. By and large, I have been prone to dishonesty, denial and blaming in my relationships with other people. My program, and the people who are there with me, have given me some great tools to help me better manage life. I have two recent examples of being able to apply concepts from the program to situations outside of specific addictive behaviors.

For some time, my nine-year old son had displayed angry and blaming behavior. He would act put out when my wife and I asked him to do his homework and assigned chores. He would be impatient and condescending towards his little sister. We were unsure how to reach our son, and how we could encourage him to make better choices in how he treats his sister and us. Scolding and

yelling were of course available and time-tested options, but I didn't think those would be very effective.

I had recently heard a third-step presentation in which the presenter told the parable of the white wolf and the black wolf fighting inside us, the consequence of which could be fatal should the black wolf win. One morning I took my son aside for a discussion man to man. I told him this story. He wanted to know which wolf would win and I explained that this would depend on which wolf we fed. I also told him that every day we have a choice of what kind of decisions we make that day, in effect which wolf we feed. I then led him in a prayer, something I had never done before. I prayed for assistance in making good choices that day. I said this can sometimes be difficult for any of us, which is why we need to ask for assistance and strive very hard each day to try to stick to our choice. This was of course essentially turning our will and our life over to the care of our higher power.

My son thought this was extremely cool, and it brought us closer together. The program had given me a tool to use with my son that was neither nagging nor shaming. The wolf metaphor

Using the Gifts of the Program in the Business of Life Continued

By Raymond B.

played very well. It is a “cool” animal to a young boy, as opposed to, say, a bunny or a dove. It allowed me to point out that as men we could be fierce and wild, but make good choices about being considerate and kind to others all the same. My son and I now have terminology that we can use when we have to make decisions or changes: “Remember to feed the white wolf today.”

The second episode occurred at work. I had taken an action which encroached on the project of someone who works with me. This resulted in some confusion and caused her extra work to control the fallout. She asked me to check with her in the future before taking actions that would impact “her stuff.” A reasonable request, it would seem... My reaction, however, was shame-based and defensive. I responded that I had certainly been within my rights and couldn’t possibly know what would cause unintended consequences for her. I told her that while I understood her request, I might well choose not to follow it. We left things at this impasse, which wasn’t a very satisfactory situation.

As I thought about it that evening, her request seemed more and more reasonable, and

I decided that I had been in the wrong to act defensively and with denial. In fact, I had known it even as I was arguing with her. The next day, I let her know that I had rethought my position. While I had looked for justifications for my action, I had ended up acknowledging, understanding and respecting her position instead. I let her know that I had come to think of consulting with her on her own “stuff” as being a way to ensure we were all better off. My coworker thanked me for getting back to her with this. In this way I admitted, at least somewhat promptly, that I had been wrong. It made me feel happy, grateful and relieved that I wouldn’t have to avoid or deny the consequences of my action. It was now okay. I wished I hadn’t made the mistake in the first place, but now that I had, I had at least followed the second best route. I could forgive myself for the mistake. I had approached my coworker to make myself feel honest, rather than to manage her impression of me. I have no idea, of course, what her impression is, or whether this incident has changed it one way or the other. And neither do I care. I do care that I act with honesty and integrity, however. Someone pointed out to me that this repre-

sented Step Ten action in managing my activities.

Without the lessons of the program, I wouldn't have done either of these things. They would simply not have occurred to me, and even if they had, I wouldn't have had the skills to carry them out. The situations would have baffled me. The

result of letting the program guide me is that I now share one more bond with my son, and I feel more honest in dealing with my coworker. I am so grateful to the program for providing me with behavioral options, and happy that my relationship skills have improved. Those are wonderful gifts indeed.



My Journey into the Middle Circle

By Rodrigo R.

Hello! My name is Rodrigo and I am a recovering sex addict.

I started my journey in SAA sometime during December of 1999. Today, my sobriety birthday is September 11, 2003. My bottom-line behaviors are around anonymous sex and sex outside my relationship with my partner. I am very clear about my definition of sex, and it includes touching and kissing someone else. It also includes exposing myself to the other person. I am very grateful for the recovery I have today from my sex addiction. I am especially grateful for the middle circle because it teaches me about humility and about not being perfect in my recovery program. Today, I have gone into middle circle behavior by following a man into a public wash-room after being triggered by him. I also acted out by myself while in the restroom. I didn't feel good about it.

This is how things would have happened in the past:

"Oh! I don't feel good about what I did. I am not good enough and I am always getting things wrong no matter what I do in my recovery. Other people are abstaining from acting out alone and/or living a celibate life, and there must be something wrong with me because my recovery program is different. I am a failure. I hate the middle circle. Maybe this was inner circle

behavior. I might as well call this acting out in my bottom-line. I might as well act out in my bottom-line. I will go have anonymous sex and get this over with."

Instead, this is what I do today in my recovery:

"Thank GOD I called my sponsor and told him about what happened. Although I didn't have to add any more into my inner circle at this point, I made a commitment to share about what happened at a meeting and trust my sponsor with his guidance. I am grateful for my middle circle; it is teaching me that I am still a sex addict and that I will get triggered – not matter how much time I have away from my bottom-line. I can even take the opportunity to write my story in the PBR! In the past, I would have gone into my addiction by having anonymous sex and unprotected sex on a multiple-time per day diet. Today, I am working on my recovery program instead by letting you know what happened. What a gift it is to have an opportunity to be honest with others and be humbled by my experience."

Don't get me wrong. Most of my days are free from middle circle behavior. But I choose to be honest about my middle-circle when it happens. I am not perfect. My sponsor is not perfect. I am a sex addict and as I understand it, I will not be cured any time soon. But I have faith that things do get better. I experience that in my life

today. All I can do is be honest and continue to take action. It's painful ego-deflation not to look good at times, but I am not perfect. My recovery is much richer today because I am able to accept and be honest about my imperfections with others in the program. Thank you, GOD, for having changed me into the person I am today and I hope

this story may be of service to a suffering addict out there. In the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, it says that self-discovery never got us sober. From my talking with other members in our fellowship as a whole, I now know that what does help with my sobriety is self-disclosure.

“To Thine Own Self Be True”

By Scotty W.

I found another gem in my morning meditation book and wanted to share. I'm sending it to you to share that it “rings true” in my own soul – it feels true in my life – not to point out that you should do something or not do something. As always, take what you like, and leave the rest.

The quote itself talks about growth and relates it to fear and loss. It also talks about how my defects tend to define my identity.

I recall sharing in meetings my fear that if I shed my acting-out and all the mental accessories associated with it, I'd have absolutely no personality, or I'd be a grouch all the time, etc. I felt my obsessive thoughts had effectively infiltrated my entire being and obscured everything else. My humor was involved; my wittiness was involved; even my ambition was involved in my “addict's psyche.” Thankfully, I was able to slowly relax, and trust my HP (this is why Step 2 is so very important; if I haven't developed a solid relationship with my HP, how can I “turn my will and my life

over” in Step 3?)

I found that, over time, my emotions and my fears about letting go were partly true, but mostly false. I did change a lot. I did lose some of my sense of humor, for example. But the humor remaining is deeper, warmer and more human-feeling, instead of critical and insulating.

Was the change worth the discomfort and pain? Let me just say that I'm thankful I didn't remain in my “old worn-out shoes”. Will it be the same for you? I honestly don't know. That's a question only your HP and you can answer.



Self-Reformation — a Stumbling Block in the Path to Recovery

By Jim L.

I must beware self-reformation; it is futile. Even worse, it can be a stumbling block in the path to recovery and a potentially lethal trap for this sex addict. Only as I face my own powerlessness, can I begin to see that the true power for recovery resides in God — in a “spiritual awakening” — not in my own power or self-will.

Belief in one’s own ability to perform, to achieve, and to succeed is a foundational principle in our free, capitalistic society. Indeed, we all have heard stories of phenomenal success by self-made men. Perhaps we even know someone personally who has “pulled himself up by the boot straps.” But how does this approach work in recovery from addiction? In a phrase, “It doesn’t!”

One of the worst things that happened to me as an addict was that I thought I was smart enough to solve my own problem and clever enough to stay out of trouble. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. In fact, for me temporary, short-term successes were numbing and gave me a false sense of recovery, delaying my entrance into the SAA program and forestalling true recovery.

I found that it was essential for me to remember that my Higher Power — the Great Phy-

sician — heals only those who **cannot** heal themselves. When I thought that I could solve my own problems or learn to accommodate them with some degree of comfort, I lost my incentive to seek the will of God — finding instead the path to spiritual and personal failure. I was forced to the conclusion that nothing is deadlier than attempts at self-reformation in the life of the recovering addict.

Recovery depends on seeking and submitting to the will of God. Without this spiritual connection, recovery is impossible, and attempts at recovery are short-lived, frustrating, and eventually futile. Repeated failures in recovery should serve as a marker — a warning that spiritual connectivity is weak or lacking and that self-will is in the driver’s seat.

Surrendering to God’s will — even when we do not have a clear picture of God — is a crucial step in making the transition from addiction to recovery. God, in turn, reveals himself to us more and more as we trust Him and submit our wills to His perfect, loving will.

My experience bears out the promise that we read at the conclusion of every meeting of my home group, namely that when we truly seek His will, ***we will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.***

Step 2 Worksheet

Submitted by Anonymous

[Editor's Note: The following article represents a method of working Step Two that has worked for some members of our fellowship.]

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity

The goal of this exercise is not to add to our shame, but to help identify how to not act out again. Step two is the second step for a reason. Let's wrestle with the words of the step to see how it actually can affect our lives.

Came to believe

For many of us, that word has loaded connotations – What does the word *believe* mean to me?

Many of us have been taught to be sex addicts by our parents or our abusers. Did I find my abusers or parents saying one thing and doing another? When I look at their lives, were their actions consistent with their statements?

What actions or beliefs lead me to either be a sex addict, or to deal with feelings on my own with sex?

Some of us have heard the phrase “do what I say, not what I do.” Someone else wrote “Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “only he who is obedient believes.” In SAA, we have the slogan “walk the walk, not just talk the talk” to mean that our actions are far more important than what we say in meetings.

How do these statements affect my understanding of the word “believe” in Step Two?

Am I living as though Step One were true (that I am powerless over this addiction and my life is unmanageable)?

What can I change so that I can better live Step One?

That a power greater than ourselves

For many of us, when we hear these words, we associate them with god or religion.

In the past, has such a power taken away the addiction?

Do I have any resentments or other feelings about god or religion seeing as how I am still an addict?

Do I really need to reach out that far to find a power greater than myself?

Step 2 Worksheet

Continued Submitted by Anonymous

Is it possible that other people could help me? Could a higher power work through people?

Am I able to reach out to other people when I am in trouble or acting out?

Could restore us to sanity

In order to work this section of the step, we need to recognize our insanity. What events show that I am insane?

Most of us look at the acting out as the insanity. Over time, we learn that the acting out is not the real insanity. Acting out is a consequence of the insanity. (The lies we see as truth.) The insanity occurs first in our heads (in lying and fantasy) and in our relationships and occurs in the hours and days before acting out.

Some examples of insanity are: insane relationships (dependency, manipulation, power plays, needs not being met, seeking approval, lack of boundaries, etc.), insane work habits and environments, and insane attitudes (black and white thinking, entitlement, rationalizations, judgmental, perfectionism, etc.)

What is my insanity? (give examples)

fantasy

relationships

work and money

attitudes

The program offers help in the insanity. In what gentle ways can the program help me in the middle of the insanity?

List what happened the last time you had an interaction with your addiction.

What was the trigger to act out?

What actions did you take to not act out?

How did you feel afterwards?

What actions does the program teach me to take in the above situations?

Step Two asks us to change our attitude in the middle of the attack. When you look at your attitude in the middle of the attack, are you living as though you are powerless over your addiction (needing help from a power greater than yourself) or are you living as though you could manage the addiction on your own? Discuss.

Sponsorship

This is for those who do not have a sponsor yet. (A sponsor is not looking to become your Higher Power but to point out ways for you to find your own loving and caring Higher Power.)

Do I know anyone in the program with more time and/or recovery than I have? Who?

What attributes does that person have that I would like to have?

What is keeping me from taking the step to ask someone to be my sponsor?

How do I feel about “reporting to someone” about my sexual activities?

What are my feelings about sharing all my secrets with someone?

What are my feelings about authority? or about my parents?

If a relationship with a sponsor is supposed to be a healthy relationship, what kinds of things would need to be different for me? How do I need to be different?

Non-Religious Spirituality

Human beings have many characteristics which are not easily measured. It is easy to measure strength, speed, ability to talk, etc. There are many things which are difficult to measure: honor, courage, nobility, reliability, compassion, generosity, patience, discernment, judgment, wisdom, honesty, and more. Is it possible to take these immeasurable items and call them “spiritual”?

It is also important to identify what is not spiritual. Some religious ideas are not spiritual. They are so easily measured by those around us. They involve ritual and rule.

What religious ideas which may not be spiritual do I have coming into recovery and what issues do I have with them?

It is said that everybody needs three things in life: significance, transcendence, and community. How can the local SAA group help you with these?

When I look at people in recovery, what characteristics do I see in them that I would like to have in myself?

One key idea which occurs in many spiritual traditions is the idea of the correct timing. Often, the right action at the wrong time is harmful. Yet, a small action at the right time can be very significant. What examples of the right timing do you have in your life? (**Example:** *Being at the beginning of an acting-out ritual and having it broken by a sponsor's call for help.*)



Recognizing Unmanageability

By Anonymous

Recently a newcomer to the program, “Kevin,” presented his dilemma with the First Step. He could see that he was powerless over sex addiction. For example, he was able to identify many situations in which his addiction took up more time than he wanted it to, when he couldn’t keep himself from pornography on the internet and when he was unable to stop gawking at people he found attractive. How it kept him from managing his life, however, was not clear to him.

This is actually a fairly common problem. Many of us have struggled to accept one side or the other of the powerlessness/unmanageability equation of the First Step. This is one of the ways addictive denial keeps us locked into addiction. For me personally, early recovery was an effort to see these two simultaneously. I could only grasp one at a time and it shifted daily whether I could embrace my powerlessness or

my unmanageability. It was when I finally could experience both together that I really felt the First Step start working in my life and I started to get clean.

For Kevin, the challenge was to define unmanageability in terms that flowed from his powerlessness. We started by talking about what it meant for him to manage his life. He said that it was to live successfully in the different sectors of life: family, education, business, religion, and community were some of his examples. Successful living happens when he manages each sector by a set of principles and values. I asked him to explain this.

Kevin said that he was in business and that his management training taught him to identify the key principles, values and practices that would allow him to work productively. Success came from sticking to those principles and following them to the end of the project or deal. He said that as long as he did this, he was managing his business.

I suggested that if he was not living by these principles or was actually violating them in the various sectors of his life then that would then lead to unmanageability. He agreed. So we looked at this idea in the area of family life. Kevin said that the key principles for him were to provide for, be an example to and spend time with his family. When he did those, he believed that he was successfully managing his family life. So then we looked at how he did or didn't stick to those principles when his addictive behaviors came into play. He noted that when his addiction was absorbing many hours each day, he wasn't spending time with his family; when he was uncontrollably sexualizing women in public he wasn't being a good example to his children; and when he was purchasing sexual stimulation on the internet instead of working on his business he wasn't providing for his family. As a result, his family relationships were a mess. He recognized that he was not suc-



cessfully managing his family life when he was being controlled by his addiction. His uncontrollable addiction was making his family life unmanageable. We briefly reviewed the other sectors of life that he thought were important and he saw that in each one his addiction was leading him to violate the principles, values and practices by which he was trying to manage his life. Sex addiction was truly making his whole life unmanageable.

This recognition was quite sobering for Kevin. It touched him deeply. He started to feel the pain that came as his denial broke down. He started to experience the First Step, rather than just say the words.

This is one way to help sponsees and newcomers face the reality of their powerlessness and unmanageability. There are others. Experienced sponsors, please write and share with the fellowship how you have helped people work through this common obstacle to recovery. Send it to the Sponsorship Corner, c/o the PBR.

Discernment vs. Judgment

By Carol Ann R.

The other day I was listening to a sponsee talk about their partner as they were considering whether to stay in the relationship or not. I asked what the sponsee thought of one of the partner's behaviors. The sponsee said they didn't want to judge their partner. I said I was asking the sponsee to discern an aspect of the partner's behavior, not to judge the partner. I made a distinction between judging, which I view as a character defect, and discernment, which I believe is a normal part of adult decision making. I think discernment is not only appropriate but necessary in deciding whether certain behavior is appropriate – not just the behavior of others, but our own as well.

For myself, I know that I have to discern the appropriateness of, for example, various candidates for president. I have to try to predict to what extent a candidate's behavior in the future will conform to how I want the country to be run. First, I have to know how I think the country should be governed – what are my values? Then I can compare each candidate's behavior – their track record and spoken words – to what I know that I value. Discernment puts principles before personalities.

Judging, I think, is personality-oriented. It fuels shame rather than understanding.

Shame says who we are at our core is wrong. The judging I have done in the past is usually based on superficial impressions of others – like voting for a guy for President because I don't like the other guy's smirk.

Here is an example of discernment from my life. For my own safety, any sex addicts I spend time with need to be serious about their program. My sponsor says, and I believe it, that people around you are either supporting you in your recovery or they are undermining it. Before I considered who I was going to hang out with, I first decided what it is to be serious. For my program, the people I hang out with need to have a sponsor, be working the steps, be going to meetings, and have a sex plan. That's just my definition, and it is now in my Outer Circle. I discern who I will hang out with based on how other people's behavior matches that Outer Circle value.

Other loving, supportive values that promote discernment rather than judging are:

- 1) It is okay to disagree
- 2) Uncomfortable feelings are okay
- 3) It is okay to make choices
- 4) It is okay to say no
- 5) It is okay for people not to like me or my choices

These values are particularly helpful in discerning what should I think or do about the people whose behavior does not fit

with my own values. This is the part that I have really, really struggled with as a co-dependent. I have been hesitant to set boundaries with others because I don't want to hurt or seem to reject someone else. I know I have been shamed and abandoned in the past and I know how it feels. But I try to approach implementing values (setting boundaries) from a place of love and support. Shame and abandonment says "You are a bad person at your core, and you

are banished forever." Implementing my boundary says, "I love you as a child of God, but I can't support your behavior. You are free to behave as you choose, but I can't hang out with you as things are right now. I wish you the best with your recovery."

Practicing discernment rather than judgment helps me to be compassionate as well as respectful to myself and others. But most of all, discernment helps me stay focused on my Higher Power's will instead of my own.

The Candle

By Paul W., Central Ohio

In my morning meditation and reading time today I noticed the candle I had lit looked like my 3 circles. I had placed a small candle in this small dish so there was about a half inch of space around it. Outside the space was the outside border of the dish. As I looked at it I thought how the central flame from the candle illuminated my inner circle. That's where the brightest light must shine for me – I can no longer hide these inner circle behaviors from the light of my consciousness. I must always know and see that they are there and know



my powerlessness over them. I looked at the candle flame; it was steady and strong, but I could easily extinguish it. I've listed my inner circle behaviors that I must abstain from – I keep the light of the candle on them when I read them out loud to other group members at the weekly SAA meetings I attend. This reading out loud helps me stay accountable to others who are working on some of the same issues as I. I will keep this flame lit on my inner circle, choosing not to hide or isolate myself. I am finding a better way when I am honest with myself and others, and when I keep these behaviors in the light at meetings.

The History of SAA in Buenos Aires, Argentina

By Gabriela L.

In 1992 I was attending a group for women addicted to unhealthy relationships based on readings from a book about women loving men too much. I had been attending for two years, since I was devastated after the man I had been with for five years left me because, for the fourth time, I had become pregnant by him and didn't want to go on with the pregnancy. Although I shared some of their feelings, I didn't feel I totally identified with the women in the group. I hadn't loved this man "too much." In fact, I had never loved him. I kept saying that I didn't miss him; I only missed having sex with him. The women would say, "Oh, you'll overcome that soon." But I didn't. One day I heard S., one of the group members say, "I'm addicted to sex." Something shook inside me. At the following meeting we read a chapter on addiction to sex from a book that follows up to the other book we had been reading. Then I knew that my addiction was sex, not relationships.

S., together with some of the other women, started a group called "Anonymous Women Victims of Sexual Abuse" in her house. One month later I joined this group. We would mainly explore the ways in which we had been abused, basing our

readings on that same chapter about sex addiction that I just mentioned. In this book, the author mentions one of the recognized experts in recovery from sex addiction and recommends a book by that author. We bought the book and started reading it. For me this meant that light started coming into my life.

S. and I started to feel and say in the group that it was necessary for us to assume the reality of our sexual addiction instead of remaining focused on the abuse we had suffered. We also thought that it was better to include men in the group and call it "Sexoaddictos Anónimos." None of the other women agreed. So S. and I said that we would be leaving that group and starting a new one focused on sex addiction. And we did. We started meeting at my home, and two men from Al-Anon, Adult Children of Alcoholics, joined us. That was on September 24th, 1992. We consider that date to be the beginning of SAA in Argentina.

After some months we opened two groups in two different churches. And that is when the true adventure of SAA in Buenos Aires began. New people joined us, and we started growing. So great was our enthusiasm that we started doing everything we could: a green pamphlet for newcomers and a yellow one called "Am I a Sex Addict?", both based on guidelines

from one of the books we had been reading. We designed a logo representing the fellowship. One day we decided to write some of the fellowships mentioned in one of our texts on sexual addiction. We chose three of them and asked them for material. SAA sent us plenty of material completely without charge, a sign of care and good will. What a surprise! It had not occurred to us that all we had started doing had already been done, and that there were a lot of people with good recovery on whose experience we could draw. I remember feeling that the SAA logo and slogan completely represented and attracted me. That bright sun coming out from behind the clouds! And "From Shame to Grace": what a wonderful promise!

We chose SAA as the fellowship with which we would affiliate. We started being in touch with the (in those days) NSO through the always-supportive Jerry. Then we made our affiliation formal, started making contributions and buying items of literature and medallions. We kept growing. But then, unfortunately, a painful time of crisis started, the result of which was the separation of a big part of the group into another similar fellowship. We left our original

meeting place and changed meeting days. We shrank a lot. For some time we cut off contact with the ISO.

Now we remain a relatively small fellowship. However, we have four steady groups in Buenos Aires, three mixed and one for gay members. These groups make up an intergroup we recently named "Estrella del Sur" (Southern Star). We are slowly growing into the interior of our country: a group has opened in the province of San Juan, and people from other cities and provinces are asking us for information about recovery. We are in touch with the ISO again.

We also thought that it was better to include men in the group and call it "Sexo adictos Anónimos."

When we find an autonomous region willing to sponsor us, we will become a developing region.

Now for the first time and thanks to the generosity of one anonymous member who offered to help us financially with the travel expenses, and the scholarships SAA offers, we are sending a delegate to the 2005. I have been honored with the responsibility of performing that task. So these days I'm thrilled with the prospect of living what I imagine as the unrivalled experience of an SAA Convention and overjoyed with the possibility of meeting all of you SAA members there. I cannot but say THANKS SAA for all these gifts during these last 12 years.

From the Editor

By Mike L.

I've always believed that the world's great religions and philosophies are all basically in agreement with each other when it comes to their teachings about living a fulfilling and happy life. A few months ago I bought a book inspired by one of the eastern religions whose basic premise has been summarized by some as "detachment." I see detachment as being the opposite of the rigidity and control issues that I demonstrate from time to time. While I don't specifically practice the tenets of this religion—actually more of a way of life than a religion—I do from time to time turn to this book for help when I find myself particularly struggling with detachment-type issues. Each time I open the book, something different strikes me. Something I noticed when I opened the book this morning was the importance of always staying in the present moment. I'm aware that a lot of the difficulties I have relate to projecting the present moment into the future, and thinking that something I presently perceive as negative will always be negative or that at the very least I will always think that it is negative. Giving it more thought, I realized that the book was actually here approaching from a different direction the concept of "acceptance" that 12-step programs have always taught. I still plan to return to this book for reminders about specific ways of acceptance, and it's also great to remember that I have a simple answer to all my problems today.

We have a variety of pieces in this issue of the PBR. Following up on the article on one means of working Step 1 from the last issue, we have an article on Step 2 this time, with articles on the remaining steps to come in future issues. And speaking of Step 1, this month's Sponsorship Corner provides us with some means of recognizing the sometimes-overlooked second half of the step, the part dealing with unmanageability. Gabriela L. contributes a fascinating article on the history of SAA in Argentina. The groups in Buenos Aires are very active, and I am happy that this distant area will be represented at the convention for the first time this year. To paraphrase the title of Raymond B.'s article, several of the other pieces in this issue treat of the gifts of the program. Certainly at the forefront of these gifts are the tools of the program, and at the forefront of the tools are the circles; along those lines, Rodrigo R. tells us of his trip into the middle circle. Looking at other tools of the program, Scotty W. writes of an inspiration he had from one of his mediation books, and Paul W. talks of a revelation he had during his morning meditation time. We also have a couple of pieces on stumbling blocks, as Jim L. calls them, which can interfere

with our recovery, if we let them take the place of our Higher Power. Jim talks about the concept that one can reform one's self, while Carol Ann R. talks about the importance of replacing judgment with discernment.

Every two months, I write to the former contributors to the PBR and ask for new articles. The response is always gratifying, and there is always room for new contributors. If you have never submitted an article to the PBR, perhaps you may find an opportunity to do so now. Maybe you're an old-timer who is familiar with the beginnings of SAA in your area, as we have an article on Buenos Aires in this issue, and we had an article on the early days of SAA in New Orleans a year ago. Or perhaps you've had a spiritual experience that you might want to share with us. We do ask, in keeping with SAA's sixth tradition that we don't lend our name to outside enterprises, and in keeping with our unofficial avoidance of feedback, that you avoid direct quotes from printed material or references to specific book titles. If you've read something that inspired you, make that material your own and tell us how it has changed your life. You can submit material online at pbr@saa-recovery.org or else through the ISO office at P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270-0949. Either way I'll get your submission.

Time marches on and the next convention is only a few months away. It's going to be a very special one, with the SAA Book becoming available to the fellowship for the very first time at that convention. I hope that you can make plans to attend and I look forward to seeing you there. Either way, I look forward to seeing you again in the pages of the next issue of the PBR. I hope you enjoy this issue and keep those cards and letters (and articles) coming...





ISO News



ISO Literature Committee, ISO Board, & Board Committees

ISO Board Minutes

**The Board of Trustees of the ISO of SAA, Inc.,
met via teleconference on January 15, 2005.
The following is a report of votes taken.**

- Approved: The logo for the 2006 ISO Convention.
- Approved: A motion to bring the donation by region figures to the 2005 Delegates.
- Approved: Ratification of the 2.7 % staff cost of living allowance.
- Approved: Changing the salary range for the position of Director of Fellowship Services from \$18,000 - \$43,442.00 annually to \$35,000.00 - \$55,000.00 annually.
- Approved: A motion to adopt within the guidelines of the Delegate Meeting business procedures that a consensus vote requires two-thirds majority.
- Approved: Substitution of the word “consensus” for the words “clear majority” in the Delegate Meeting business procedures.
- Approved: A revision of the Delegate Meeting business procedures to reflect that all votes will be by count.
- Approved: Swapping time slots of the regional caucuses and the focus groups and to add half an hour to the resulting regional caucus time.
- Approved: A motion to hold focus groups after the Saturday Delegate session, with no competing convention events scheduled.
- Approved: Mailing of a scaled down version of the *Call to Convention* to registered groups and intergroups and to post the full *Call to Convention* on the internet.
- Approved: A motion to print the *Annual Report* in a less costly format.
- Approved: Posting of the *Annual Report* on the website after the 2005 ISO Convention and after future conventions.

Approved: A raise of the Delegate Fee from \$20 to \$35.

Approved: A motion to spend all money designated for the printing of the SAA Book on the first printing of the book.

Approved: A recommendation of the 2006 ISO Budget to the 2005 Delegates for approval.



THE SAA BOOK IS COMING!

During the Board's January meeting, it was announced that *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, the fellowship's long awaited basic text, will be delivered to the ISO Office in the spring and will be available for sale at the 2005 ISO Convention.

Both hard and soft cover editions will be printed. Members who supported the book project by bidding on a Limited Special First Edition will have their copies mailed to them as soon as they arrive, perhaps even before the convention.

The Board will set the selling prices for the hard and soft cover versions at its next teleconference, which is scheduled for March 19. The March–April issue of the PBR will announce the price, along with instructions for ordering.

* * *

Another new piece of SAA literature will be available for sale even before the SAA Book. Like *The Bubble* and *Three Circles*, the pamphlet, called *Sexual Sobriety and the Internet*, is a trifold and will sell for fifty cents. Also like the other trifolds, it may be purchased for thirty cents when ordered in quantities of a hundred or more or in combination with other trifolds in quantities of a hundred or more. Orders will be filled beginning March 1.

A Spanish translation of *Sexual Sobriety and the Internet* is planned and should be ready in time for the convention.



Board Makes Delegate Meeting Changes

During its January teleconference, the ISO Board of Trustees took significant actions that will affect this year's Delegate Meeting.

There will be a new look – or better, a new sound – during voting on agenda items. The revised business procedures call for all votes to be by count. This change relieves the meeting chair from having to decide whether a voice vote sounded like a consensus or not. It will also eliminate a separate vote to determine if a consensus had been reached.

A second procedural change defines what constitutes a consensus. It will take a two-thirds majority to reach a consensus. The two modifications combined should go a long way in reducing the possibilities for arbitrary decisions being made in regard to voting.

In an effort to draw greater participation in regional caucuses, the Board decided to experiment this year by swapping the time slots of focus groups and caucuses. In 2005, regional caucuses will follow immediately after the Friday session of the Delegate Meeting, with two hours set aside for regional business. Focus groups will follow the Saturday morning session of the Delegate Meeting. To encourage participation, there will be no competing convention activities scheduled during the time reserved for the focus groups.

As the fellowship grows, it is becoming more and more expensive to print and mail hardcopies of the complete *Call to Convention*. Last year printing and mailing cost \$2,217.16. Starting this year, the Board voted to mail an abbreviated version of the document to each registered group and intergroup. The mail out will contain business procedures, agenda, agenda items, proposed budget, Delegate Certification form, and a list of Board and Literature Committee members, alternates, and vacancies. The complete *Call to Convention* will be posted on a special Delegate Page that will be accessible from the ISO website. Enough hardcopies of the complete document will be printed to mail to groups upon request and for delegate use at the Delegate Meeting.

Last year the total cost of the Delegate Meeting was \$5,325.26. Delegate fees brought only \$1,900.00 in revenue. The cost breakdown was as follows:

EXPENSE	AMOUNT
Delegate Orientation Booklet	158.00
<i>Call To Convention</i> (printing)	1,890.00
Postage To Mail <i>Call To Convention</i>	327.16
<i>Twelve Concepts Illustrated</i>	19.35
Forms	16.00
Annual Report (printing)	300.00
Delegate Lunch	2,295.00
Audio/Visual	<u>320.25</u>
TOTAL	5,325.76

Because the *Call to Convention* savings will not entirely make up for the deficit, the Board also reluctantly changed the amount of the Delegate Fee, raising it from \$20 to \$35. Although it is probably not necessary to do so, groups are reminded that each delegate represents a meeting, and the Delegate Fee is a group expense rather than an individual expense.

LOOK FOR THE ABBREVIATED VERSION OF THE *CALL TO CONVENTION* TO BE IN THE MAIL DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF FEBRUARY. THE COMPLETE VERSION WILL BE POSTED ON THE SAA WEBSITE (www.saa-recovery.org) SHORTLY THEREAFTER.



Intergroup Communications

This edition of the ISO News contains a lot of information related to the upcoming Delegate Meeting.

As anyone who has served as a delegate knows, getting to the meeting and convention and then back home is expensive. Without substantial group help, for many SAA members the cost is prohibitive. Throughout the fellowship, many groups collect a special weekly Seventh Tradition offering to accumulate money to pay the cost of sending a delegate to the ISO annual business meeting. Even so, small groups struggle to come up with money just as individual members do.

The Eugene SAA Intergroup passes along a program it has devised to offer its member groups a pooling account for those that wish to participate. Provisions of the account are as follows:

- No meeting is required to participate in the pooling account in any year.
- If a meeting decides to participate in the pooling account, Intergroup must be notified by September 1 following the last convention to be eligible for the next convention.
- Participation in the pooling account does not automatically roll over from year to year but must be elected by each new deadline.
- Each meeting that elects to participate in the pooling account is entitled to an equal share of the total money generated in the account by the time of the convention.
- If the delegate for a participating meeting chooses not to attend the convention, the share for that meeting is divided evenly among the remaining participating meetings whose delegates choose to attend the convention.
- The pooling account does not roll over from year to year: all money is distributed each year before the convention, and a new total starts at \$0 and begins to accumulate after each convention. The only exception is when no delegates from participating meetings choose to attend the convention. In that case, all of the monies accumulated in that year would roll over to the next.

- Once a meeting decides and elects to participate in the pooling account for any one year, that election is irrevocable for that year. This means should a meeting later decide that it no longer wishes to participate in the pool for that year, the meeting cannot withdraw its funds from the pool for that year. Instead, it receives its share of the pool.
- The pooling account is maintained by the Intergroup treasurer much in the way the treasurer now maintains accounts for the delegates for each of the meetings. The primary difference is that whereas now a separate account is maintained for each meeting, a group account is formed for all meetings electing to participate. All monies coming in from the participating meetings are held under a single total, and a list is kept of all meetings participating in the pooling account.
- If delegates do not spend all of the funds available to them for the convention, they return the overage to the pool for the following year.

The ISO has a more detailed version of the Eugene delegate pooling program. It will be sent to any SAA member or group upon request.





ISO Financial News

ISO Income/Expense Summary For the Year Ending December 31, 2004

This report does not include income and expenses associated with the annual ISO Convention or the Delegate Meeting nor does it include travel expenses, which are for the most part funded by the convention surplus. Any convention surplus not used for travel expenses is used to fund the ISO's various reserves.

ISO Income/Expense

January – December, 2004

	Year To Date
Income	
Net Sales	39,723
Undesignated Donations	127,554
General	93,476
LifeLine Partner	34,078
Miscellaneous Income	5,115
Total Income	172,392
Expenses	
Wages/Benefits/Taxes	96,489
Wages - Outreach Related	24,874
Wages - Other	53,091
Benefits	12,131
Taxes	6,393
Depreciation	1,089
Insurance	2,103
Board/Committee Expense	7,964
Postage	1,507
Communications	6,248
Rent/Utilities	12,938
Office Related	6,745
Financial	6,593
Plain Brown Rapper	11,994
Translations	3,477
Total Expenses	157,147
Surplus/Shortfall	15,245

As reported in the last issue of the PBR, a tremendously successful November fund raiser in the Bay Area on behalf of the ISO brought income of more than \$11,000 which literally saved the year financially. Just how important a role this windfall played is further emphasized by the fact that the Surplus/Shortfall figure shown on the previous page does not include 2004 convention travel or Delegate Meeting income and expense. While the convention usually covers Board, Literature Committee, and staff travel, such was not the case last year. Neither did the Delegate Fee pay for the total of Delegate Meeting expenses. Combined convention and delegate income fell \$11,594 short of paying for the Delegate Meeting and travel. When all of this is taken into account, the ISO finished with an overall year ending surplus of \$3,651.

What this shows is that, minus the Bay Area fund raiser, the ISO would have ended up with a net loss of \$7,349. The last PBR financial report ended with a note that encouraged other areas of the fellowship to contact the ISO to find out how the Bay Area was able to stage such a successful event. So far, there have been no inquiries.



Southern California SAA Convention



The Southern California Intergroup is holding its first local convention on Saturday, July 23, 2005 in Los Angeles, California. Although a local convention, it is open to all who are seeking recovery from sexual addiction, including newcomers.

The Convention will be an all day event. The registration fee is \$25. Participants will attend 3 workshops. There will be opening and closing ceremonies and speakers.

To request a registration form and information, please write to:

Mike M.
PO Box 501
Van Nuys, California 91408
(818)768-6870

You may also call Roy W. for assistance at (818)726-4841.

How to Submit a PBR Article

First:

Write from your experience, strength, and hope. Others may need to hear exactly what you have to say.

Second:

Send your article by e-mail to: PBR@saa-recovery.org

or mail to: ISO
P. O. Box 70949
Houston, TX 77270

Third:

Send the **Article Release Form** below. Download an extra from the SAA website if needed or feel free to make copies.

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts...” Step 12

Submission deadlines:

Dec. 1, Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Aug. 1, Oct. 1

Release Form: I hereby give this newsletter, its successors, assignees, and those acting on its authority permission to copyright and/or publish any articles, poems, other written material, or art work pertaining to my personal story of recovery from addiction and my personal experience with or opinions about the SAA fellowship or program. I understand that additions may be made to my written material and that it may be changed or edited. I further understand that every effort will be made to assure my anonymity. I possess full legal capacity to exercise this authorization and hereby release the ISO newsletter from any claim by myself or my successors.

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____

WITNESS: _____ **DATE:** _____

Mail to: ISO, P.O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

3890-D North Freeway
Houston, TX 77022

Phone: 713-869-4902
Toll Free: 800-477-8191

web: <http://www.saa-recovery.org>

Office e-mail: info@saa-recovery.org

PBR e-mail: PBR@saa-recovery.org

Office Staff

Jerry B.

Director of Fellowship Services

Klaus P.

Assistant Director of Fellowship Services

Jonathan C.

Publications and Administrative Assistant

PBR Staff

Mike L.

Literature Editor

Jerry B.

ISO News

Jonathan C.

Layout Editor

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a twelve-step program of recovery based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our primary purpose is to stop our addictive sexual behavior and to help others recover from their sexual addiction. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior. Our fellowship is open to women and men regardless of religion, race, ethnic background, marital status, sexual orientation, or profession. Our members define their own sexual boundaries with the guidance of their sponsors and other group members. We encourage our members to discover and explore what healthy sexuality means to them.

Region

Board Members

Board Alternate

Literature Committee

Lit. Com. Alternate

Great Lakes	Roger B. <i>Chair</i>	Ken S.	Elizabeth S. <i>Chair</i>	Vic K.
Intermountain	Shelley K.	Jeanette W.	Chris D.	Chris T.
North Central	Greg B. <i>Secretary</i>	Jim A.	Tim L.	Thea D.
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North Pacific	Tim E.	<i>Vacant</i>	Jeff W.	Lawrence S.
South Central	Judy N.	Darryl H.	Greg G.	David D.
Southeast	Francie E.	Carla P.	Jim L.	Mark S.
Southern Pacific	Ed B.	Larry C.	Thom C.	David B.
At Large	Don K. <i>Treasurer</i>		Mike L. <i>Secretary (PBR Editor)</i>	