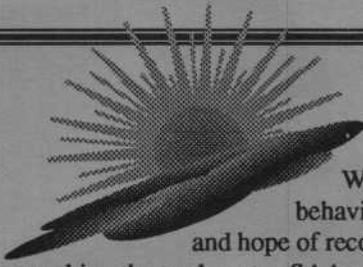


THE Plain Brown Rapper

The SAA Newsletter

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December, 1989 Edition

The purpose of the Newsletter is to be a voice of the SAA membership. Written by and for brothers and sisters recovering from compulsive sexual behaviors; to be informative, sensitive and expressing the experiences, strength, and hope of recovering members. It is intended as an additional tool of recovery for those working the twelve-step SAA program.

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Trust — Then Love

The way I look at life, people are like animals. We all have a way of protecting ourselves. I saw a rabbit today. I tried to pet him. He wouldn't let me get close. I understand that. There really needs to be trust. I took my time at walking up to him, I told him I wouldn't hurt him. I also new where he was coming from. Words do not cut it. It takes a lot more. It takes time.

I saw a lot of animals today. They were running very free. The animals need to work for food, love and trust just like us. It is something we all need to work at.

The animals also have a sense for danger and where to go for help, like we do. When people are frightened they have choices. Sit in it or ask for help. God gave us those warning signs for a reason. It is not easy. Nothing is good for us if it is easy.

I know love is free. I also believe it is scary. I can acknowledge there needs to be trust. I think for myself trust takes time and it is scary work along the way. My family told me for years as a child "trust me, I'll teach you." I did and the trust got broken. And when I became an adult, people told me "trust me," that got broken. Then some real friends said "trust me." I guess I needed to or I wouldn't be where I am today.

so I can really relate to the animals. They need water, love and trust, and friends.

When a big animal or person comes up and says "I won't hurt you," words won't cut it. It takes time — they need to be shown in a caring way. There needs to be more than someone just saying trust me. There needs to be understanding and a slow, soft touch.

Also in my life there needs to be risks. I need to take risks with people or I'll never be able to love or have people love me. I learned by watching positive people to see how they interact, how they show love and trust. I also needed to trust me — trust that I can make it in this life.

Watching the animals again today helped me to realize that I did that as a kid. I do believe in my heart that is how I became a survivor. The animals taught me. Watching how they live and how they become friends, I know it is possible out there somewhere to get love.

— Marjorie

Song for a Hero

It was November 10, 1989, the first full day of free passage for the citizens of Berlin. The Wall was on its way down. How much I was caught up in the spirit of the moment. How much I wanted to stay home that Friday night and watch the special programs the networks were airing. But it was also the night of the surprise recognition party for Marv — Marv, whose gentle southern accent coming from Minneapolis has been the “voice” of SAA for the last five years to people all over the country.... Reluctantly I pulled myself away from the MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour to help honor a brother who has served our program with such dedication and humanity that I felt duty-bound to attend.

After some words of recognition, a lovely song dedicated to him, and two plaques and a memoirs binder presented to Marv as a storehouse for the letters of appreciation that arrived..., the 50 or so gathered asked for “open mike” time. One by one brothers and sisters went up to the microphone to tell Marv of their gratitude to him. Speaker after speaker spoke movingly of how, in many cases, Marv had saved their lives when their despair was so great that they stood at the threshold of suicide, or in one case, of commitment to an institution for the insane.

Though in the program for 10 years, I hadn't met Marv until I returned to Intergroup service a few years ago. We also began to talk a little on the phone when I would get calls from him for men to be 12-Stepped into my group. Thus what I knew of Marv was limited. He was someone it was hard to imagine anyone would dislike. He did not give offense. Occasionally, I had felt Marv's reports took a little longer than might be necessary (or was it that people from the South just talked more slowly?). And on a very few occasions something had gone wrong with a 12-Step referral (a wrong number, or a wrong person referred to our group). These hadn't lowered my esteem of him, as they were seldom, and only what one would expect of a fellow human. Marv was to me a dedicated worker, very stable, sound in judgment, much underpaid, and someone I was very glad to have on board in our office.

What I heard people saying this November evening was astounding to me. This gentle man, who seldom talked about himself, who was admired by all for his gifted way of handling the telephone calls, but who seemed in so many ways just like other addicts (working the program one day at a time, as he too was not “cured”), was far from ordinary. These were not the required tributes we feel obliged to make to those who retire, those who die, those who win an award. These tributes were coming from an entirely different plane. Marv had been an undeniable vehicle of Higher Power influence, as speaker after speaker testified so movingly of the powerful impact he had had on his/her life.

Marv reminded us that this was a program of principles, not personalities. Granted that is true, Marv. But it takes people to manifest principles. What our modern world has so painfully lost through the intrusive reporting of a free press is heroes. I think we need heroes. So many of our culture's heroes have fallen because we have confused possessing a superior skill — be it in an art, sport, religious, or political career, or being a hard worker — with what a hero really is.

A hero is not necessarily a perfect person, but a person who has overcome, or has taken on, great obstacles in the pursuit of a worthy end. The self-serving nature of the work of athletes, rock singers, movie stars, top business executives, and politicians (/statesmen) who are “pop heroes” pale before a true hero: A Beethoven unsilenced by deafness, a Gandhi standing before a subjugating political system, a Mother Theresa caressing those poor and abandoned who were left to die in ignomy, a Bill W. and Dr. Bob who endorsed an anonymity that kept them unknown to the majority of those they had helped, and a Marv who rose above the trying consequences of his addiction to lend a very helping hand, and understanding compassionate voice, to others who were suffering too. Heroes haven't died out. We have just forgotten where to look for them.

I may have missed seeing some of the great events of the day on TV by going to Marv's recognition party. But I got something much better: I got a chance to bask in the reality of a modern hero. It has been an honor just to know you, Marv. It has been a gift to have the example of your service set before me. While I feel absolutely unable to touch people's lives the way you have, I am not powerless to remind them of what we had in you — a gift from our Higher Power that deserves a hero's place of honor.... We would all like to be a hero like you. But your example is so unselfseeking, and the warmth of your welcome so sincere, that how could anyone wish to take that from you? Thank you for sharing it with the SAA fellowship and our sister 12-Step groups these past five years.

— John B.
Minneapolis, MN

A Christmas Poem

Here it is another year
 Christmas trees with decorations
 Once again Christmas is here
 We come together for celebration

Time to be with family and friends
 Shopping people come and people go
 We look for cards to send
 Everyone is wishing for snow

Holidays for some are lonesome times
 Do we know the real meaning here
 God wants us to be loving and kind
 This is the time there should be no fear

Time for happiness and sharing gifts
 Food and candies everywhere found
 Santa Claus and reindeer myths
 Church bells with heavenly sound

This joyous time will soon be gone
 Our love for each other will never die
 We will remember the many songs
 And we will think of Jesus and look to the sky

Merry Christmas to everyone...

— Bob P.
 Minnesota

A Sex Addict's Prayer

Lord, lend us your hand as we thread our way through the labyrinth of our sexual dysfunctions, for without Thee we shall surely be lost.

You have taught us that the greatest growth results from the deepest pain. Therefore, we thank Thee for our afflictions for they reveal to us truths that might otherwise remain hidden forever. Pain is one of the keys that can open the secret doors that lead to Thee.

Bless my brothers and sisters who share this disease. For by giving unconditional love and support to each other, we prove the Divine Presence within each of us.

We walk a lonely path, Lord. Be with us.

Amen

— Donald E.
 Fresno, CA

God's Way Not Our Way

I have to tell you a story about me. As you know, I cannot speak for others, but only for me.

I am a sex addict. I was arrested and through the Grace of God allowed to get help before I was sent to prison, but the bars that hold me now in time will be gone. The bars that held me my whole life have been removed. I have lost my seven children, my farm, my wife, all that I thought I needed until I was arrested.

Today I feel more freedom to be Me than ever before in my life. Perhaps God will also allow me to see my children in time.

I met many a friend here in this place. I've been able to with the help of another man who also was allowed to get help from SAA before coming here. We have been able to give support to others who are hurting as we were before we found SAA.

We have tried, my friend and I, to get SAA inside the prison walls. It appears we are close. Please pray for our dreams so SAA can reach the hurting and the bruised.

Although we may be in "a prison," the freedom we feel now is stronger than at any other time in our life. Thanks to SAA and our Higher Power.

— Bob & Walt
 Oakdale, IA

Letter From Jan

I feel deep gratitude when I reflect on the gift of recovery that I've been blessed with since I reached out for SAA help in May of 1988. At that time, suicide was a rapidly increasing thought as a solution to the pain I was experiencing. The only other conceivable option was SAA recovery. I knew that I couldn't stop my sexual behavior on my own and that I'd either die at my own hands or recover. There no longer was any middle ground. I was out of control and the shame I was feeling was choking out what little life was left in my soul.

I was familiar with 12-Step recovery as I had begun AA recovery in November of 1985. After a year and a half of relapsing, I began to experience continuous sobriety from alcohol. I was healing physically, but I repeatedly stated at AA meetings that I needed quality in my sobriety or recovery was of little value. I remember the concern on the faces of other recovering AA members and I felt uncomfortable. What was the matter with me? Was I a failure in recovery too? No, I hadn't been failing, but addressing only my alcoholism, a serious addiction which supported and masked my primary sex addiction.

I'm beginning to learn today what I meant when I talked about "quality" in sobriety back then. It's only been a result of my times of sexual sobriety and going through the pain of withdrawal that I've begun to touch a part of me that's been pushed aside and disowned for all or most of my life. The greatest gift I've experienced in SAA recovery is my own gradual inner healing of shame from years of abuse from others and from my own path of sexual self-destruction. That "quality" is a growing acceptance and belief in myself; that I've always had value, not for what I did or didn't do, but just by being alive. It's a growing acceptance of where I've been, that the abuse from others was not a reflection on my value as a person, and that my being a sex addict doesn't mean I'm "bad," but my highest value had been to escape pain and shame. The SAA recovery gift is a discovery (or rediscovery) of a spiritualness within me.

I read recently that the Greeks had a word for the God within, en theos. They recognized the inner Spirit (or God, Higher Power, Energy Force, Love) within every person. We use it today in the word, enthusiasm. It seems to follow that enthusiasm is synonymous with love. I remember some months ago wondering if I would ever know love. Love had always meant an intense sexual high. I no longer believe that.

Today I'm feeling enthusiasm in more areas of my life, my work and those I work with, my journaling, my children, recovering and nonrecovering people, my home, even my plants are healthier! I can honestly say that I have quality in my recovery today which is a growing enthusiasm or love for my life and the life around me.

Does this mean that I'm recovering perfectly? No. I'm embracing my humanness and no longer apologizing for my existence. For me sometimes its two steps ahead and one back. I had a sexual relapse three weeks ago, and although I wasn't happy about it, I found that my reaction to it has changed over this past year. I didn't think of suicide, neither did I want to abuse myself in sexual ways. I'm becoming gentler with myself. I'd like to share a portion of my journal entry following that relapse.

"Maybe I'm doing all that I can do at this moment and time will take care of the rest. I'm not trying to do the worst I can, I'm trying to do the best that I can. When I look back to where I was, it's a miracle how far I've travelled. I have hope today that the road ahead will be more of an adventure and less of an ordeal, there will be more love and less despair, and more growth and less backsliding. I do have faith in the recovery process, and in the fact that I'm a part of it and will continue to be."

Thank you for walking the SAA recovery path with me. Without you, the gift of recovery would not be possible for me.

— Jan
Central Wisconsin SAA

Do you have a story, a poem, an experience of growth, or would you just like to share your emotions and feelings? Please write The Plain Brown Rapper. Your brothers and sisters in SAA would like to hear from you. We have much to share with each other. Please write to PBR Editor, c/o SAA, P.O. Box 3038, Minneapolis, MN 55403. Please submit all writings for the January newsletter by December 28, 1989.