



### President's Letter

## Is SMART Recovery® a Moderation Organization?

SMART Recovery® supports (1) abstinence from any substance or activity addiction and (2) going beyond abstinence to lead a meaningful and satisfying life. Our 4-Point Program<sup>SM</sup> addresses addiction itself (Points 1 and 2) and quality of life (Points 3 and 4). Points 3 and 4 are the primary focus of discussion in many meetings. To remind you, Point 1 focuses on motivation to abstain; Point 2 on coping with craving; Point 3 on problem solving (when practical problems can be resolved) and emotional self-management (when practical problems may not be “solvable”); and Point 4 on building a life of

enduring satisfactions (a meaningful and purposeful life).

SMART Recovery® encourages attendance by individuals in any stage of recovery. Those maintaining long-term abstinence will likely be most interested in discussions of Points 3 and 4. Those in early recovery will likely pay more attention to Points 1 and 2.

SMART Recovery® recognizes that individuals may be in different stages of change, at any one time, across what is likely to be a range of addictive behaviors. For example, one participant may be ready to stop drinking but not ready to stop smoking. Another participant may be ready to quit cocaine but not ready to quit marijuana. Both participants may be drinking excessive caffeine and overeating, and be unaware that these are also addictive behaviors.

Even individuals who have not made the decision to abstain from any substance or activity are welcome in our meetings, and allowed to state (during the check-in or perhaps at other times in the meeting) their current activities

and plans. Their statements have led some to the inaccurate conclusion that SMART Recovery® is a “moderation organization.” Despite participant statements about “cutting back” or “moderating,” the working time of the meeting is devoted to how to achieve abstinence and quality of life.

*(Continued on page 2)*

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## The SMART Recovery® 4-Point Program<sup>SM</sup>

**T**he SMART Recovery® (Self-Management And Recovery Training) program helps individuals gain independence from addictive behavior.

*Our efforts are based on scientific knowledge and evolve as scientific knowledge evolves.*

### The program offers specific tools and techniques for each of the program points:

- Point #1:** Enhancing and maintaining motivation to abstain
- Point #2:** Coping with urges
- Point #3:** Managing thoughts, feelings and behavior (problem-solving)
- Point #4:** Balancing momentary and enduring satisfactions (lifestyle balance)

Undoubtedly, many individuals attending non-SMART Recovery® support groups are not abstaining but do not say so. The reality of any support group is that it cannot control its participants outside of meetings, only the meeting discussion itself.

The meeting facilitator maintains a balance in the meeting between allowing participants to speak honestly, while keeping the discussion focused on how to achieve and maintain abstinence. Participants who have not decided upon or achieved abstinence will benefit from observing how others are doing so, without being shamed about their own stance. We believe that our practice of welcoming all will result in more people achieving abstinence (or moderation or at least harm reduction) than if we have entrance requirements. Because we do not use the terms “alcoholic” or “addict” we are in no position to prescribe abstinence to anyone. We are an organization that supports individuals who have chosen to abstain (whatever their reasons, however serious or minor their problems are) or are considering abstinence (but they might ultimately choose another course of action). Empowering individuals to make choices is at the heart of the SMART Recovery® philosophy.

In particular, SMART Recovery® meetings encourage the discussion of slips and relapses. These discussions are often among the most profound discussions we have, as the participant re-connects with the deeper reasons for choosing to abstain. We do not keep track of length of abstinence (although participants are free to do so), partly because having a longer length of abstinence can discourage someone from discussing a relapse.

For individuals who are immersed in other models of recovery and styles of meetings, SMART Recovery® may require some effort to understand (an effort apparently many have declined to make). We do not expect to appeal to everyone. However, our record of success and growth indicates that a sizable portion of people with addictive behaviors find our approach meaningful and helpful. If you're considering abstaining from an addictive behavior, please join us for a SMART Recovery® meeting, and see if you find our approach meaningful and helpful to you on your recovery journey.

(Lorie Hammerstrom and Brett Saarela also contributed to this article.)

*Tom Howath*

*Editor's Note: Tom's article brings up several points I find meaningful: (a) 12-step is just a theory about reality, rather than being reality itself. (b) SMART Recovery® is not A.A., and uses a different theory and approach. (c) In SMART Recovery®'s approach, we “let” people think for themselves, and we are not overly scandalized by free speech. (d) SMART Recovery® is not written in stone: we cleave to science, which entails flexibility and change, and we can tolerate ambiguities and unknowns. (e) Our methods are those people can use for more effective self-management, and “effective” depends upon the individual's goals and values. (f) We are organized to support people who have chosen to abstain or who are considering doing so.*



### SMART Progress

## Mark Your Calendars and Plan To Join the SMART Recovery® Annual Gathering!

**When?** October 15-17, 2010

**Where?** Humphrey's Half Moon Inn & Suites, San Diego, CA

**Who?** SMART Recovery® volunteers, face-to-face meeting and online participants, members of the Board of Directors, and friends of SMART Recovery®.

**What?** A gathering/networking opportunity for all who are involved with SMART Recovery®, or those who desire to learn more about the program's tools and techniques. Specific agenda items for sessions are being developed, but here's a brief review of the planned activities:

### Friday, October 15th:

12:00 Noon – 5:30 p.m. Optional afternoon outing/local attractions

7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Meet and Greet Dinner at the hotel with networking activity

### Saturday, October 16th:

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00 – 12:00 noon Sessions

12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 – 5:00 p.m. – Sessions

6:00 – 8:30 p.m. – Beach side dinner

### Sunday, October 17th:

8:00 – 9:00 p.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00 – 12:00 noon Session

12:00 noon Adjourn

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We'll soon have additional information on our website [www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org), including registration and hotel information. In the meantime, please mark your calendar and start planning to join in the learning and fun!

## SMART Recovery® Online Update

by Jonathan von Breton, Director, SMART Recovery® Online

I am going to talk about two things in this update. The first, of course, is fundraising. The second is the growth of SMART Recovery® Online (SROL).

Fundraising continues to be of crucial importance if SMART Recovery® and SROL are to survive. At SROL, we do our best to remind people to donate and give them opportunities to do so. This is an ongoing effort.

Thus far, this year, we have had two fundraising events. The first was "New Year Around the World." We started with Kiritimati. Kiritimati or Christmas Island is a Pacific Ocean atoll and part of the Republic of Kiritimati. They celebrated the New Year 19 hours before the East Coast of the United States, where I live. Then, hour-by-hour, we welcomed the New Year as it occurred throughout the world. Besides having a great time, we generated several hundred dollars in donations.

A little later in the year, but not much, we celebrated Valentine's Day. For a small donation, people could participate on two threads. One was, "How do I love SMART?" The other was, "This is dedicated to..." We also had a live event in PalTalk for Concerned Significant Others, Family, and Friends. The Valentine's Day event also yielded generous contributions.

In addition to generating donations, these events are important for two more reasons. They encourage a sense of community. Hosting these events involves a lot of people, both as organizers and participants. They make people aware of the need for donations.

Even those who did not donate cannot help being aware of the need.

On to my second subject—SROL is growing and the growth is measurable. How do I know? I measured it.

I use two items where I can get accurate figures. The first one is the number of new people who post in the Welcome Forum. While not every newcomer posts there, it is easy to count the ones who do. The other measure is that of attendance at online meetings. This is also easy to track because the numbers are entered in a database.

My baseline was a 50-day period from 4/6/09 – 5/25/09. My most recent measure was the two weeks from 2/15/10 – 2/28/10.

During the baseline period, there was an average of three newcomer posts per day. For the last two weeks in February of 2010, the average was five. That was an increase of two posts per day. Again, that was only the new people who posted in the Welcome forum, not all new people.

Meeting attendance grew even more. The average number of attendees in Parachat (text) meetings grew from 28 to 33. It would have grown more except we have a limit of 35 people in that room at one time. PalTalk (voice) meeting attendance also increased. It went from an average of 14 to 18 people per meeting.

Overall, I am very pleased with the growth of SROL and our ongoing fundraising efforts. I'm very grateful to the wonderful cadre of volunteers who make this kind of growth possible. We have a variety of outstanding volunteers serving the many people who benefit from SROL. The volunteers and members are who make SROL the great place it is!

*Editor's Note: If you think meetings online would be impersonal and cold, guess again. When I've participated, for instance in the fundraisers, it's fun, the people are great, and it's easy to feel the fellowship of a community.*



## International Development

### SMART Recovery® Australia Update

by Jim Villamor, SMART Recovery® AU Coordinator

Jim and Josette traveled to Gladstone, Queensland, and conducted a two-day training for 50 people. Gladstone is a coal mining town and people want to get SMART Recovery® started. The surrounding towns are also interested in SMART Recovery® for its practical self-management skills, which they like and currently lack.

Jim and Josette presented in Port Macquarie and Grafton, NSW. On this trip, we focused on networking and training Indigenous workers who like SMART Recovery® and want to use it in their communities. Over the past six months, Josette has built some strong relationships with Indigenous elders, who are serious in promoting the SMART Recovery® program.

Josette recently presented at a seminar at Turning Point in Victoria. Seventy-five people attended and learned the principles of SMART Recovery® and how to apply them in everyday life.

In the coming months, Jim and Josette will be working with Indigenous people to develop a manual that suits the Indigenous people. We have been invited to participate in a planning "forum" in Newcastle where key people from different tribes will give feedback and assistance on developing a manual with more pictures and diagrams that suit these communities.

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We have developed a new logo that will launch in April. Check out our website soon to see our new look!!  
[www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au](http://www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au)

## SMART Recovery® UK Update

by David McCue, Treasurer and Member, Board of Directors

It has been some time since we updated *News & Views* readers on UK activities. SMART Recovery® UK has had money problems that regrettably led to the redundancy of Fraser Ross, Development Manager. However, we continue to meet the needs of increasing numbers of people who seek assistance with addictive behaviors.

Interim funding arrived in December 2009, which is helping to see us through as we determine plans for the future. We are presently operating via Board volunteers and part-time office support provided by Carol Hammond. Carol provides information about SMART, responds to new meeting requests, and tracks where meetings take place throughout the UK. If you facilitate a meeting in the UK, and your meeting is unlisted ([www.smartrecovery.org.uk](http://www.smartrecovery.org.uk)), please contact Carol with your information. Calls from individuals seeking meetings continue to increase. We want to be sure that if a local meeting is available for inquirers, that we can share that

good news! Carol's email address is [info@smartrecovery.org.uk](mailto:info@smartrecovery.org.uk) and phone number is 01463 729548 / 0845 603 9830.

### Current activities include:

- Expanding the UK Board of Directors to include people with charitable, fundraising, and other relevant backgrounds. We also want to include volunteer facilitators and participants as trustees.
- Increasing the level of support our Central Office provides to SMART facilitators and members.
- Fundraising: Developing relationships with funding agencies—those who have provided support in the past, as well as seeking new funding sources.
- Analyzing and disseminating information pertaining to all SMART Recovery® UK activities (meetings, attendance, marketing, partnerships, development, etc.).
- Reviewing and updating training and monitoring arrangements.
- Improving operational systems, including information management, tracking of meetings, etc.
- Submitting annual returns to the charity and company regulators.
- Completing the newly drafted Business Plan and Corporate Plan,


incorporating clearer definitions of activities.

- The SMART Recovery/Alcohol Concern Project, which has helped to establish SMART Recovery® groups across England, held a conference in London on March 9. Speakers included Dr. Joe Gerstein. The conference disseminated learning from the project and provided guidance to those who wish to expand peer-support options in their area.
- Consolidating existing partnerships including strategic relations with funders, partners, service providers, etc.
- Increasing the profile of SMART Recovery® UK.

We will keep you apprised of ongoing progress. We are 100% dedicated to ensuring that

SMART Recovery® UK remains vibrant, continues to grow, and meets the ever increasing demands for the services we provide. We are grateful to the numerous volunteer facilitators, volunteer office assistants, and others who share their time and talent to help us move SMART Recovery® UK forward. As Henry Ford once said, "If we all pull together, success will take care of itself."

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## SMART Recovery® Alberta Update

by Curtis Boudreau, President, SMART Recovery® Alberta

**Hello to all of my SMART friends.**

Things continue to run smoothly up here in Alberta. We haven't had the luxury of expanding and opening up new weekly meetings in the last quarter.

Unfortunately we have had the Lethbridge meeting close down due to personal issues pertaining to the lives of the two people who were running it. They say when one door closes, a new door opens. Luckily there is a person who would like to get a SMART meeting up and running in Claresholm, AB. Claresholm is not far from Lethbridge, and we will hopefully see participants travel the short distance in order to attend SMART meetings once again.

We continue to do regular presentations at five different recovery centres in Alberta. These include the Renfrew Detox Centre, Alberta Health Services, Lander Treatment Centre, The Salvation Army Centre of Hope, and the Calgary Drop-in Centre. The meeting atten-

dance in Calgary has been growing steadily, and we owe a lot of that growth to the regular presentations we have been doing around Calgary to get the word out that there is a "refreshing alternative for recovery", and it's SMART.

Just recently, I went to a youth home – New Outlook, and presented to the staff and the residents of the group home. I am happy to say they were blown away with our program and I will be heading back there to present when new residents move into the youth home. The guys who live at New Outlook are in their late teens and early twenties. It was a privilege to be able to speak to people early in their "addiction careers," and show them two things: (1) a clean and happy life IS possible, and (2) how to get it using the SMART Program.

An interesting experience that I had recently was to go to the Substance Abuse in Later Life (SAILL) program and present to some of their long-time members. I spoke after a gentleman who did a great job of presenting the AA program to the members. After he spoke,

the members applauded. After I spoke and let them know that they can continue with the AA if they choose to, AND attend SMART, and showed them how I have benefitted from both a spiritual program (NA for me) as well as SMART, I too was applauded, and I had four people pick up the SMART Handbook on the spot! A few of the SAILL members are now regular attendees of our weekly meetings.

That's all from Alberta until next quarter! I continue to feel privileged and blessed to be able to bring this AMAZING program called SMART Recovery® to those who are battling with addiction. For many, they have been losing that battle. That is, until they hear about SMART Recovery®, with its four points and five tools that provide them with the ammunition that empowers them so they can finally say, "In my daily battle with addiction, I'm finally winning!"

Until next time,

Curtis

## SMART Recovery® Program Tools & Techniques

The SMART Recovery® 4-Point Program<sup>SM</sup> employs a variety of tools and techniques to help individuals gain independence from addictive behavior.

**These tools include:**

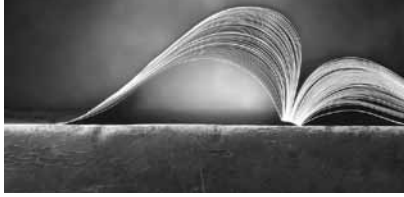
- Change Plan Worksheet
- Cost/Benefit Analysis
- ABCs of REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) for Urge Coping
- ABCs of REBT for Emotional Upsets
- DISARM (Destructive Images Self-talk Awareness and Refusal Method)
- Brainstorming
- Role-playing and Rehearsing

Participants are encouraged to learn how to use each tool and to practice the tools and techniques as they progress toward Point 4 of the program—achieving lifestyle balance and leading a fulfilling and healthy life.

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## Book Review



### *Good Without God*

by Epstein, Greg M. New York: Harper Collins, 2009 ISBN 978-0-06-167011-4.

Review by Sandcrab Margarita, SMART Online Message Board Volunteer

Mr. Epstein is the Humanist chaplain at Harvard University, and his stated purpose in this book is to help readers find purpose, compassion, and community without supplication to a deity. This is welcome news for us in SMART Recovery®, not because we are all anti-religion—that's hardly the case—but so that we hear an outside voice demonstrate that there are ways to be objectively good (in historical context) without following the directives of those people who claim to speak for a deity.

However, in perhaps a bold post-ironic bit of sectarianism, Epstein then goes on to advocate his brand of capital-H Humanism as the best hope for a strong, effective secular voice that there is a socially acceptable way to do good without a god.

As a person in recovery, my primary quarrel with Epstein is not accepting his secular yardstick for what is good and what isn't, but with the if-you-can't-beat-'em-join-'em resignation that formal organization is necessary to define what is "good." Epstein hints that as modern people, we need some of the products of religion without adopting the nominal focus of religion. In a nonreligious

community, there is still a need for ritual and fellowship, perhaps even more so in these days when it is easy to live at an emotional distance from one another. Unfortunately, Epstein ties the ritual to the meaning.

The first three chapters are the substance of the book. Epstein takes the reader on a conceptual exploration and a chain of deduction that clearly establishes that a definition of *good* without a god is equally or more beneficial to people as a definition of *good* with a god. These first few chapters describe the subtitle: *What a Billion Nonreligious People Do Believe*. These chapters curiously follow a statement in the introduction that belies their purpose. Just before demonstrating to us that it is possible and practical to be good without a god, Epstein tells us that his very answer is unnecessary.

Huh? Are the first three chapters the bait before the switch? Maybe so, as Epstein plants the seed for his true purpose early on. He says, "Tolerant, fair-minded people of all religions or none do not dwell on the question of whether we can be good without God. The answer is yes. Period. Millions and millions of people are, every day. However, the question why we can be good without God is more relevant and interesting. **And the question of how we can be good without God is absolutely crucial.** Those are the questions in this book—the essential questions asked and answered by Humanism. I invite you to explore these questions, and Humanism's answers, with me." [Introduction, page x, emphasis added]

The assertion later on that all nonbelievers are actually capital-H Humanists is where the purpose of the book is exposed: to be good without a god, a person must be a Humanist. Furthermore, and unsettling to this reviewer, is the notion that

*Humanists are what they are because they can ape the role of organized religion*. So, we can be good without a god if we surround ourselves with all the trappings of a people who think they can be good only with a god.

The net result of this advocacy is that it still leaves out in the cold a person who does not believe in a god and is not inclined to recognize the trappings of a religion. Epstein characterizes such people as "afraid" (Introduction, page xv) and not just "cutting off our nose to spite our face, [but] chopping off our head to spite our body." (Page 218)

This is a shame; stripped of its advocacy for organized Humanism, *Good Without God* is a solid, straightforward validation of the moral and ethical strength of the nonreligious.

Within the logic of his polemic, Epstein both alludes to and declares support for several of the core beliefs and tools of SMART Recovery®. Early on, he hints that philosopher David Hume's "is-ought" problem leads to the knockout punch for goodness without a god (page 31.). Later, Epstein gets specific on this theme and identifies our beloved ABC Worksheet as serving a near equivalent to prayer (page 182).

Epstein identifies a comparative disadvantage nonbelievers have while operating in a world seemingly dominated by the religious.

"Humanism and atheism often lose out to religion not because of anything remotely related to theological belief, or even because people need to think of themselves as better than others, but because we often cannot help but think of ourselves as part of a valued particular group, which is often associated with religion." [page 201]

Then he steps right into this methodological trap.

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So, what's the best use of this book for a typical SMARTie? At one level, it's a pat on the head that yes, indeed, our pursuit of recovery without a Higher Power makes sense and can provide just as much meaning as a more theistic approach. At another level, *Good Without God* notes how scientific achievement and the lessons of human experience go hand-in-hand to evolve our notion of "good" for the better. Maybe the best benefit of this book for those of us who recover by recognizing our internal locus of control is that not only can we be good without a god, but if we survive the swim through Epstein's evangelism, we also discover that we can be good without being a card-carrying Humanist.

### ***Take Control of Your Drinking...And You May Not Need to Quit***

by Michael S. Levy Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University Press, ©2007

Reviewed by Richard Ceranek, Facilitator, Chicago West/Naperville and Online Technical Assistant/Message Board Admin

When first reading the title of this book, I thought to myself: "Take control of my drinking? Sure." As someone who has been in recovery for many years, I was skeptical of even the thought of trying to take control of my drinking.

By using a couple of simple tests, Levy does a great job of walking you through the processes of analyzing whether you have a drinking problem. With the use of what he calls the Pro and Cons of drinking (very similar to what I know as a CBA, or Cost benefit Analysis), Levy shows you the things you like about drinking and demonstrates what harmful effects drinking is having on your life

and the lives of others. Using a rating scale of 1-10, this concept highlights the information into real life terms. By using real life examples, the author pulls you in with the hopes of identifying with others who have gone through the same thing you are possibly going through.

I think one of the most enjoyable parts of this book for me was the way the author takes the concept of moderation and allows the reader to decide whether he or she can moderate their use of alcohol by using a moderation contract. This, to me, destroys the myth for most of us that we can moderate. I think most of us in recovery try at first to keep the thought that we can moderate alive. Some of us cling to the hope we can moderate like a drowning man grasping for a life jacket. By the use of Pros & Cons and other techniques that lead the reader into relatively painless and even enjoyable self-analysis, the author empowers the reader to reach some personal truths.

The book is an easy read and was an enjoyable and informative read for me. This is a great book for anyone in recovery or a person contemplating whether he or she has a drinking issue or not.

I would recommend this book for anyone involved in the recovery field; in fact, I am going to purchase another copy to share with one of the members who attends the Face to Face SMART Recovery® meeting I facilitate. I do not want give you the entire book in this review; rather, I would recommend you obtain the book, enjoy the content, and add it to your own recovery library.

## SMART Ideas



### **Recovery Month**

by Hugh Delaney, Facilitator, Columbia, MD

Over the last 20 years, *Recovery Month* has inspired millions of people to raise awareness about addiction, share their stories of recovery, and assist others. During September of 2009, there were hundreds of events. These included Recovery Night at Major League Baseball games, the walk over the Brooklyn Bridge, and several large motorcycle rallies. For the first time, SMART Recovery® is participating in the planning efforts of the 2010 "Join the Voices for Recovery: Now More Than Ever". On January 27, I attended the second quarterly meeting for *Recovery Month* Planning Partners. While some events are just in the planning stage, here are some ideas of how your group can participate.

The best resource for information is the *Recovery Month* website ([www.recoverymonth.gov](http://www.recoverymonth.gov)). Using the toolbar on the left side, you can easily find information on:

- Finding and posting events in your area
- Sign-up for a monthly newsletter
- Register to receive the Recovery Month Tool Kit
- How to share your recovery story
- Listings of Recovery Month radio and television programs
- Downloading banners to display on your website

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Another handout from the meeting suggested using social media forums to promote awareness and activities. Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook have all created channels to share information. Go to these websites, add “/recovery-month” to their location (URL), and you will be directed into those areas.

To quote from the *Recover Month* website: “The *Recovery Month* observance highlights the societal benefits of substance abuse treatment, lauds the contributions of treatment providers and promotes the message that recovery from substance abuse in all its forms is possible. The observance also encourages citizens to take action to help expand and improve the availability of effective substance abuse treatment for those in need.”

SMART Recovery® encourages all of our groups and participating individuals to become involved in *Recovery Month* and help achieve these goals.

The next planning partners meeting takes place in May and will announce many events. So be sure to check to the *Summer News & Views* for an update. If you have questions about how you can participate in “*Join the Voices for Recovery: Now More Than Ever*,” please email me at [smartcolumbia@gmail.com](mailto:smartcolumbia@gmail.com).

## The Search for New Facilitators

by Richard Lacroix, Detroit Area Facilitator

As facilitators, we learned during our training that one of our duties was to encourage others whenever possible to become facilitators. The question is how to recognize people who have potential and encourage them successfully to take on the challenge? And let's face it, becoming a SMART Recovery® face-to-face meeting facilitator, with the time and effort it demands to first get a

meeting off the ground and then sustain and promote it, is a lot of hard, if satisfying, work.

Sometimes, a meeting member will make the decision and simply come forward and ask for more information or seek it out online. This is manna from heaven and almost as rare. Most of the time, it's up to current facilitators to recognize people seem suitable and then suggest the idea to them to see if they are willing.

In the past year, I have managed to recruit and/or mentor five new facilitators and so I was asked to provide any tips that I could share that might assist other current facilitators to spot potential candidates. Well, those who know me know I am usually willing to oblige any SMART Recovery® request, so here goes a list of “things to watch for.”

- Attendance. Regular attendance at meetings is a sine qua non for facilitator candidates.
- Length of Abstinence. The longer a member has been abstinent, the better, because it suggests commitment and stability.
- Interest. Listen carefully to the members' cross-talk. It is a valuable asset if they demonstrate that they have listened closely to topics and have something of value to share.
- Knowledge. Those members whose knowledge of the SMART Recovery® principles and techniques has been growing, are those to consider.
- Willingness. A member who is willing to participate freely and to help out, for example, setting up or cleaning up, printing copies of articles and bringing them to the meeting, etc., demonstrates useful characteristics.

- Garrulousness. Ideally, SMART Recovery® facilitators are comfortable speaking to a group of people, can think on their feet, have a sense of humor, and can recognize how various participants are feeling from tone of voice, body language, and expressions.

I'm sure I could go on, but those are the major signs that I personally have used in the past to help me to identify potential facilitators.

The next thing you're probably wondering about is what approach to take in suggesting to members that they might make good facilitators. I think it is unwise to broach the topic with such individuals in front of the group, as this may seem like high pressure. Instead, I ask the individual to stay behind after the meeting to speak privately. In the conversation, I point out that I have noticed during meetings that he or she shows the characteristics required of facilitators and compliment his or her contributions to the group.

I think it best to ask if the person would consider the idea, emphasizing that there is no pressure to answer on the spot. An undertaking such as this is worth careful consideration, neither suggested nor accepted in haste, so keep the sales pitch as low key as possible, please. Provide whatever information to the individual you think useful, answer questions, and state your availability to provide more information and answer other questions.

Be prepared to accept rejection of your proposal. It is not really about you, about SMART Recovery®, or about the value of SMART Recovery® to the individual. It is the individual's decision whether to take on additional responsibility.

## Using Newspapers to Promote New SMART Recovery® Meetings

by Rod Allwood, Facilitator

In August, for the first time I began facilitating SMART Recovery® meetings in Mentor, Ohio. My attendees initially came from word of mouth and from inquiries emailed or phoned to the SMART Recovery® Central Office. In the beginning, the meetings were small, averaging from three to five people weekly. Frankly, that was fine with me. I needed to learn how to apply what I had learned from my SMART Recovery® distance facilitation training.

As autumn yielded to winter, I realized that especially challenging times were near for many people with addictive behaviors. This, I thought, would be due to cold-induced cabin fever and the end-of-the-year sequence of holiday events, starting with Halloween and ending with New Year's Eve. So, with a couple months of experience under my belt, and realizing that I needed to reach out to others, I decided to promote SMART Recovery® more heavily in my area.

Of the various promotional actions I took, one began as a very simple request of our local newspaper to consider running a PSA (public service announcement) for our weekly Tuesday meetings. This seemed simple enough, but I soon learned that simple requests sometimes are ignored...no response from the Editor or Associate Editor... ah, too busy, I thought. I decided to try some-

thing that turned out to be a very positive idea.

For three or four days, I reviewed the "Community/Metro" section of the paper and looked for empathic articles written about local organizations helping others and/or about local people "making a difference." Once I identified the "right" reporter, I sent an email explaining SMART Recovery®, the fact that we now had a meeting in the heart of the paper's circulation area, and why a PSA would help us. That was not the right reporter, of course. He referred me to yet another reporter who, as it turns out, was probably equally or perhaps even more interested in helping others.

The second reporter called me and wanted an interview. I was asked to set aside at least a half hour, because she wanted to do a feature story about SMART Recovery. Wow, I thought. During the meeting, she indicated that she needed to schedule an appointment

for photos and that the story would be run in their on-line news section and featured in their Tuesday edition of the newspaper... the day of our next meeting.

The results to date from that single story printed about SMART Recovery® are as follows:

- 173 unique "hits" on the SMART Recovery® website traced directly back to that newspaper story;
- seven new meeting attendees (five of whom are still attending regularly);
- several more phone calls from those "considering" attending (early Stages of Change); and
- a radio interview resulting from a staff member at the station seeing the newspaper story.

In hindsight, I probably should have suggested a "story" about SMART Recovery® from the very beginning vs. just a PSA. But even if my expectations

were too low at the start, it is now clear that the wisest strategy for us in SMART Recovery® may be to identify reporters interested in new things and who have empathy for their town and citizens. Not only was a story published about SMART Recovery®, but now I have a friend in the press. I think it's a strategy that can work for many of us who want to get the word out to people who might prove interested in our approach.

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## **SMART Recovery® at the Academy of Eastern Arizona**

by Brent Hays, Behavior Modification Coach and SMART Recovery® Facilitator, Holbrook, AZ

The Academy of Eastern Arizona is a state licensed residential treatment facility that includes a boarding school. The facility is secure and offers educational, counseling, and recovery program components for female teens. Our owner, Daniel Taylor, was enthusiastic about bringing SMART Recovery® into the facility, not only to deal with substance abuse and addiction, but also with other forms of negative and maladaptive behavior.

Many of our students at AEA come into the facility with multiple problems, ranging from drug use/abuse, alcohol use, tobacco, and sexual addiction. Issues also include conduct disorder, self-injury, eating disorders, and legal problems, such as probation and pending criminal charges. In part, our decision to use SMART Recovery® at AEA was because of its wide range of applications. Whether it is breaking curfew, school truancy, destructive behavior, poor decisions/habits, fighting, open defiance of authority figures, SMART Recovery® has an application. As a self-help program, SMART Recovery® was attractive because it enabled us to offer a model of recovery that addressed more than just alcohol or drug use by our residents.

We have now been using SMART Recovery® for two years. Originally, an AEA therapist introduced SMART Recovery® to AEA in 2008. After one year, it was determined that the emphasis for SMART Recovery® was drifting toward therapy and diagnosis rather than teaching self-management tools. In June,

2009, I was employed as the Behavior Coach for AEA to teach and deploy SMART Recovery. This has seemed to be a better arrangement. With my background in youth corrections, I naturally tend to hold people accountable for their actions and decisions. I attended SMART Recovery® training in July, 2009 and in early 2010, I attended SMART Recovery® training specifically for teens.

During this time, we have created a format for using SMART Recovery® in our unique setting. At intake, we assess each new resident for her motivation level in addressing her specific issue/s. As a secure facility, we have a “captive” audience, and we require our residents to attend SMART Recovery® groups. Nevertheless, the effort each student puts forth in her recovery is entirely up to her.

At AEA, SMART Recovery® groups meet weekly in groups identified by common concerns. These groups address specific maladaptive lifestyles and destructive choices. Each resident then meets with a SMART Recovery® facilitator privately and individually to discuss the issue, and work through the tools and homework. This means that each resident is part of a group that meets four times each month.

We arrange it so that two meetings each month are “support” meetings, and two meetings each month are more advanced in delving into issues. As well, I meet with each resident once or twice each month to process the information and apply SMART Recovery® specifically to her choices. I also incorporate material that supports SMART Recovery®, such as questionnaires on building healthy relationships, goal

setting, visualization, and self-assessment activities to prompt the residents to apply SMART Recovery® concepts to many aspects of life.

Through SMART Recovery®, the residents are empowered to make healthy choices and decisions for themselves. At AEA, each resident is on a “level,” with level one being the beginning, and level six being a graduate of the program. Residents earn or lose points that determine their level status and advancement through the six levels. As they work through these levels, they are faced daily with multiple choices. These include such things as obeying house rules, showing respect to peers and staff, completing assigned chores, turning in school work, interacting with family members via phone visits and written correspondence, and functioning successfully in the society of the facility. We remind residents that they make these choices, but that they are accountable for the consequences of their poor choices. In turn, we remind them that they benefit from good choices and decisions.

SMART Recovery® is a wonderful fit for the residents at AEA. As each resident deal with the inevitable difficulties of living in a dorm setting, times of decisions and making choices will arise. Residents must “get along” with other residents in a close setting that calls upon them to make efforts to consider others. They will determine whether or not to comply with the rules, finish assigned tasks, respond appropriately to staff, or deal honestly with their issues and family relationships. The setting is a good place to learn and practice making good choices and decisions. In the bigger picture, SMART Recovery® helps each

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resident to use the 4-Point Program<sup>SM</sup> of Building Motivation; Coping with Urges; Self Management of Thoughts, Feeling and Behaviors; and Lifestyle Balance, in order to help her address problems that brought her to the facility.

Our program emphasizes helping the teen to understand that she has the power and ability to control her successful recovery. Through role-play, worksheets, written assignments, SMART Recovery<sup>®</sup> handouts and discussion, each individual is encouraged to apply the principles of SMART Recovery<sup>®</sup> to her life and situation. We refute the idea that people are powerless or that something is “wrong” with them that prevents their complete recovery and continued sobriety. We encourage residents to address their issues vigorously. We encourage them to confront aggressively self-defeating thoughts, urges, temptations, and activating or triggering events, and to understand that they are capable, with the coping skills and techniques taught by SMART Recovery<sup>®</sup>, to overcome these problems.

Upon departure from AEA, we encourage graduating residents to locate and affiliate with a SMART Recovery<sup>®</sup> group. AEA staff helps graduating residents to use the tools of SMART Recovery<sup>®</sup> to re-assimilate into mainstream society.

For further information or questions, you can contact Brent at [bhays050@cablone.net](mailto:bhays050@cablone.net), or 928/205-9950.

## Making Something Important

Hank Robb, Ph.D., ABPP

A person was walking down a street and saw two women sitting with wool yarn and knitting needles. Curious, our observer asked, “What are you doing?”

The first said, “I’m making one stitch after another.”

The second answered, “I’m keeping my child safe and warm from the winter wind.”

Which of these two would YOU rather be?

Building and maintaining motivation to abstain is the first point in SMART Recovery’s<sup>®</sup> 4-Point Program<sup>SM</sup>. It is not very likely to happen unless there’s a point to what you are doing. Abstaining, all by itself, is not much of a point around which to build a life. It’s just one stitch after another. The psychologist Ogden Lindsey noted, no goal a dead person can accomplish is that great a goal for a living one! Dead people never drink, snort, shoot up, or place a bet. “Not doing” is something all dead people “do” quite well.

Think of it this way. When you go to a SMART meeting, you inevitably leave some place else, your home, your place of work, etc. In addition, we hope the “leaving” isn’t what’s important. What’s important is GOING to the meeting. You can’t go without leaving and you can’t leave without going, but which one is being emphasized—going or leaving?

What’s getting the emphasis in your life—leaving your addictive behavior behind or going in important directions that happen to leave your addictive behavior behind? The latter will provide much more motivation, because abstaining is just a side effect of making certain things important in your life. It’s keeping your child safe and warm from the winter wind rather than just making one stitch after another. Well, what might be the things you want to make important?

If you don’t know, here’s something that might help. Keep a pad and pen by your bed. Each night before you go to sleep, think back through your day with this question, “What did I do today that was actually worth my time?” The answer is not, necessarily, what was “fun.” Cotton candy may be “fun,” but it won’t sustain you. Vegetables, whether you like them or not, will. And, properly prepared, many vegetables are delicious in the moment you eat them. As you think back over your day, what experience, or experiences, can you find that (not before and not during) were actually worth the time you put into them? Write it, or them, down. Then write down one thing you are willing to do tomorrow just to see if tomorrow evening, on reflection, you also rate it as having been worth your time.

Do this for thirty to sixty days and you will likely have a fair number of activities that you, not someone else, rate as actually worth your time. Then, concentrate on doing these things. You will likely find that “leaving” your addictive behavior happens with relative ease, because with the tools of SMART Recovery<sup>®</sup> at your disposal, “going” rather than “leaving” is now getting the emphasis. You are no longer just “knitting one stitch after another.”

Your motivation to abstain goes up because your addictive behavior just doesn’t fit with what you are now motivated to make important. Each time we move or fail to move our hands, arms, feet, and mouth, we make something important. So, what will you make important—going or leaving?

## People Power



### My 4th Birthday

by a7u, SMART Recovery® Online chat volunteer

I don't recall the date exactly but sometime in the third week of January 2006 I finally wised up and stopped drinking. This after daily drinking for 25 years!

The first few months were pretty rough and scary, but it's been real smooth sailing since then. Sobriety agrees with me a lot more than drunkenness.

Previously, the longest I had ever held a job was about 18 months. I have been with my current employer for four and a half years. (I was still drinking when I went to work for this firm).

I am no saint, but I am significantly more relaxed and in control of my emotions than I ever had been. In some ways, I am more with-it now than before I started drinking. It's easier to let things go. I'm not perfect, but am a lot closer now than I ever had a chance to be while drinking.

I can have a conversation that is relaxed and easygoing. My mind is stable and my outlook is clear. I'm not brittle, not worried that the other person has an agenda. Maybe they do, but it doesn't bug me because I'm in control.

I'm not broke all the time. I can take vacations. If I blow a tire, I can just go buy a new one without worrying about whether I also have enough to buy food and pay the light bill the same week.

My health was horrible, but now I am in superior condition, extremely fit.

Blood sugar and blood lipids are down. Body fat is down, muscle mass is up.

Whereas before, all I did was drag myself through every day—get drunk every night, pass out, get up the next day and do it again—many long-forgotten interests have revived. This is one the sweetest parts of sobriety, finding new ignition for old interests.

The best thing of all is that I don't think about alcohol at all, ever, under any circumstances. I'm at liberty, free to move through life as I wish, without dragging that goddamn ball and chain behind me everywhere. It's freedom, pure and simple.

I wish the same for everyone.

### Life Expectancy Doubled

by edward\_g, Message Board participant

My "living" was cut way short by my addiction to beer. I had the same 24 hours as everyone else, but it was very empty. When the morning started, I would be planning on my afternoon appointment with my beer buzz. So if I got up and did a few things, it would soon be noon and time for lunch. As my "appointment" was set for 4 p.m., I would have to start getting ready by noon. No use starting other activities because I could not be late. I would waste a couple hours, and then it would be time to go get the goods and bring them back home. Around 2:30 or so, I head out on that mission. For all practical purposes, my "living" for that day is over soon after noon.

Not much of a life. Now though, without my need to drink like that, my life (living) expectancy at least doubled—if not more. All those empty hours remind me of empty calories if you are a weight manager. Now those hours are filled with useful things to do. Not only from noon to 4:00 or 5:00, but the entire evening lives on. The evenings

obviously were useless as I just sat there and wasted away on the buzz that I tried so faithfully to acquire. Now the evenings are clear and focused.

My days used to be about four hours long. Well, I am a senior now, so I don't know how many days, years, or decades I might have. If, however, I fill each one to its fullest with a clean and sober lifestyle, it will all be worth it.

### Old Dog, New Tricks

by Jim (a.k.a. GJBXVI) Liaison, SMART Recovery® Message Boards

This coming Friday will mark my one year anniversary on SMART Recovery® Online, as I registered as a participant on January 22, 2009. My last "drinking episode" took place on the evening of October 3, 2008... so I came to SMART Recovery® with a little over three months of what's been called "white knuckle" sobriety. I discovered SMART Recovery® while searching for an alternative to AA and the traditional 12 step programs. I had trouble accepting the "disease" model concept and that I was "powerless" over alcohol. I am not "knocking" those programs—they have helped many on their journey to sobriety and it is not my place to extol the virtues of one over the other. What matters is finding what "works" for you! I found what "works" for me here at SMART Recovery. During this past year, I have learned (and am continuing to learn) many things about this guy called "Me."

I've likened myself this past year with SMART to the "Transformer" toys my grandson is so fond of. I'm sure you're all familiar with them—they start out as one thing and then by moving the pieces around, they "transform" into something else. Like the toy, my "Transformer" had all the pieces already in place. Everything in my past—all the good, the bad, and the ugly—are what have made me "ME"! I'm the result of everything and everyone I've met over the years—

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the people, all the places, all the things I've experienced in my life. Those are the "pieces" I had to work with and "transform" into something else.

I'd say the most important thing I've learned is that I control my thoughts, feelings, and actions. Granted, there are "outside influences"... but that doesn't change anything! I'm still the one with sole control over me. With this knowledge and the use of SMART's ABC tool, I've begun to "re-think" my thinking—to question and to notice my thoughts and beliefs about any given situation. By doing so, I've discovered that many of my thoughts and beliefs were irrational and that they fueled self-destructive behavior.

I've also learned that every time I chose to drink, I was picking alcohol over the things that were more important to me, gambling with and jeopardizing them.\* These included family, friends, health, self-sufficiency, life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and sense of humor. As with any type of gambling, one experiences losses... **NOBODY** wins all the time! It wasn't any different for me.

I recently added up what my last DUI has cost me. I still shudder at the thought! But the thing is... that dollar amount was only taking account of this most recent incident! It didn't include any costs from prior arrests, let alone the money I spent on drinking over the years. While that amount is huge, it is not my biggest loss...

All the time I've spent related to drinking has been, literally, pissed away! There's no way for me (or anyone else) to make up for lost time. The thing is, not only was my time lost... my actions caused others "lost" time as well. I don't

know how much time family and friends spent "waiting" for me while I was in the bars, how much time they lost while hauling me around when I was without my driver's license, or how much time was lost while they sat and waited for me while I was in court. This "list" goes on and on!

My behavior also caused loss of self-sufficiency and independence. I hated having to be dependent on others for rides to work, the grocery store, appointments, court, etc. I hated putting that burden and additional stress onto them. My sense of humor, something I deem important, suffered as well. I've found having a sense of humor has benefited me over the years—it has kept me sane in an often insane world! I've discovered maintaining a sense of humor is a rather difficult task when you're sitting in jail!

These are just some of the things I was not "thinking about" when I chose to drink, just some of the losses I caused myself by "gambling" with what is most important to me. By "re-thinking my thinking," I have become aware of these things and keep myself focused on them. They are my strongest motivator in sobriety, as I am **NOT** gambling with those things again!

Through SMART, I've discovered "triggers" are something I can control. I've learned that "triggers" don't trigger anything, because by themselves, they are only an invitation to one action or another. When you practice accepting such invitations, you become good at accepting and will do so quickly and easily, with little thought. The same is true for the opposite... If you practice refusing such invitations, you become good at refusing and to do so quickly and easily.\*\*

In these past 12 months, I've experienced the full spectrum of emotions—emotional highs and lows, good times and bad, joys and sorrows. At one time, any of these things would have been a trigger, an "invitation" to drink. And I'll be the first to admit there was a time I was well-practiced at accepting such invitations! But that has since changed. I've now become "well-practiced" at refusing those invitations to drink, and have become a "party-pooper" to my past self-destructive behaviors.

Instead, I have reframed and redirected those "invitations" to activities productive for me and for others, too. One of these activities is my involvement and volunteering here at SMART Recovery. The time I spend doing this has been (and continues to be) beneficial to my recovery and it's allowed me the opportunity to give back by helping others.

I've also started doing some writing again, having put it on the "back burner" long ago. I've finished numerous projects around my house that had been half-finished or long on my "to do" list. I'm currently working on stripping and refinishing an antique oak dining room table... something intended when I first bought it many years ago. I've even managed to do some reading, which again, was something I used to do and enjoy, but stopped doing in favor of drinking. Every day, I don't have to look very far to find something accomplished the day before, which builds self-confidence: I **AM** in control of my life once again.

All the pieces of the old "me" are still there. Over this past year, I've taken all those pieces and rearranged them into something different... and have "trans-

formed” them into a different shape. So what is it that’s going to keep me from “transforming” back to my previous shape? **GLUE!!!** The ingredients of that “glue” are all the things listed above... the things that are most important to me.

I like this new guy called “Me”! Being sober does not feel like “missing out” on something—nor being “cheated” out of being able to drink, because that **IS** still a choice. But, I choose not to! I’ve come to realize how much life drinking cheated me out of... how much it took away! Sobriety allows me show up for life. By simply showing up, I’ve had the opportunity to “fall in love” with life... all over again!

So if I ever hear somebody recite that old adage, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks!” I’ll argue with them for sure... as SMART has provided the tools to teach this “old dog” some “new tricks”!

Thank you, SMART Recovery®!!!

\* Joe Gerstein “Hierarchy of Values”

\*\* Hank Robb, PhD

## Milestone, Smilestone

by Sam29, Online participant and former SMART Recovery® Online Facilitator

Can you believe it? It has been five years since I had an alcoholic beverage. Looking back at last year’s message board post initiated this next section of “copy and paste”:

*I continue to “work” on having a good life. I have learned that it is not something you reach and it is finished but more about a sense of contentment,*

*during your life. Being content that life can be tricky as well as enjoyable, at times. Because I continue to be abstinent, the tricky parts are easier to handle and so are the enjoyable times. That was the hardest one for me to get used to.*

*The first thing we do when we are sober is learning how to deal with the difficult stuff. We learn the tools and talk about that all the time, here at SMART. However, I think the most difficult thing is how to apply those tools so you can really enjoy the delightful times. They taught me how to socialize, again. The tools taught me how to smile, not a phony smile, a real smile with genuine goodness behind it. The tools allow us to let go of all that trash that we built up over the years of abuse to ourselves.*

*Yes, I said ourselves. That is the key. I know now that all these years I made myself suffer. No one else is to blame because I allowed it to happen. I know that some of you have extenuating circumstances and caught yourself up in other people’s meanness, but that was not my case. I determined my path then and I determine my path now. The difference is I do not think of how others think about me, I do not think about being perfect, I do not think of being something I am not.*

*What I do now is let it go. What I do now is enjoy the moment. What I do now is stop myself (stop thought, divert etc.) when I start to awfulize. What I do now is stop blaming myself when things do get “tricky.” What I do now is deal with things head on, do my best and I then become content with myself for trying. Unconditional Self-Acceptance.*

The reason I wanted to repeat the above is that it still applies. I am still enjoying life on life’s terms. I am still applying SMART Recovery® tools and using this site as my main support system. Do I think I can manage without SMART Recovery? Of course I can. But why would I want to? There are real people here at SMART Recovery® who continue to inspire me and sometimes when I am feeling a little down they knock some sense into me too. Nothing like a reality check, if you know what I mean.

New members especially, keep me on my toes. It is helpful to be reminded of where I was when I first came here. And, the oldies but goodies members are my comfort. Doing something as important as we do every day is so much easier to do when others work with you. Long-term sobriety works better when you can share. At least it does, for me.

Therefore, my friends I look forward to many more years of sharing, and caring about others but most importantly, caring enough about myself to stay healthy and sober. If there is one message I would like to instill in everyone here it is that in order to be a good friend, parent, or partner, it is imperative that you look out for **YOU** first. Be well all!



## From Beyond the Walls

### *Belief Systems Are a Choice*

by Barry A. Grant

During a recent lecture at the facility where I work, someone asked whether SMART Recovery® can be applied to everyday life in the absence of problems with drugs or alcohol. The answer to that was simply: In life it is important that one manages oneself in such a way that brings about a balanced and positive lifestyle while recovering from events which are not usually preferred. As a comparable example, one exercises to maintain good physical health.

Many people probably see SMART Recovery® only as a means of dealing with issues of alcohol and substance abuse. However, because its core is REBT, it stands to reason that the same principles can be applied to meeting life's myriad of challenges. After all, the healthy processing of one's thoughts is the key to healthy decision-making and in turn healthy living.

In this quasi-correctional environment in which I work, many of the residents (as they are designated) a great deal of them still believe that might

makes right.

Although a substantial number of these residents appear to be

willing to make the leap from irrational and self-defeating thinking, the pain of the past and uncertainty of the future seems to have them deadlocked in the fear of change.

I can say in all candor that the information and tools I received from

SMART Recovery® during my several years "Inside The Walls" was truly a meaningful time insofar as introspection as well as realizing that my power was in the present. In addition, it gave me the opportunity to take a good look at why I was there—which indeed was the result of my thinking—and to see that only when I set myself free would I be able to live a balanced and free lifestyle.

Finally, in asking whether or not my comparison to addictive behaviors with chemicals and/or alcohol had any relevance to those who chose to say that

they had no issues of either type of dependency, the majority admitted that they did in

fact see similarities in their behaviors and sought out more information about SMART Recovery®.

Positively Speaking: We first form habits and then our habits form us...

***...healthy processing of one's thoughts is the key to healthy decision-making...***

### Articles are Welcome!

If you have a story or information you would like to see published in the *News & Views*, please feel free to submit a copy to Emmett Velten, Editor, via e-mail: [ev\\_verb@msn.com](mailto:ev_verb@msn.com). Unsolicited material is most welcome!

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