

### Inspirations



## From hopelessness to gratitude

by Barb McDowell, SMART Recovery Meeting Participant

Every day I write down something for which I'm grateful. My apartment. My health. Portland sunshine. My nieces and nephews. And it helps.

It wasn't always like that, though, until I found SMART Recovery. About 10 years ago, I had what my friends called my "country music year" when everything felt like it just fell apart — my marriage ended, a pregnancy ended six months in, my father died suddenly and unexpectedly. It was a lot to handle and, along with other things, I gradually began to "handle" it more and more with alcohol. I wanted to mask what was

happening and make the bad feelings go away. I was grateful for nothing.

As the years went by, I kept my job but drank heavily when I wasn't working. I had great friends but I was the one who always finished the chardonnay. I tried to piece my life back together but it didn't turn out the way I wanted it to. I didn't find another love, I didn't have any other children and I lost interest in my work. I was completely lost. I kept drinking...secretly.

Finally, four years ago, I hit a wall. I felt hopeless, had no ambition and couldn't understand what my purpose in life was. If you've ever been in that place, you know how terrible it is. I had two choices...I could keep believing that things were hopeless and that my life wasn't worth anything OR I could try to make a change. I chose change.

I put myself in residential rehab. The good thing was that I was sober for the four months it took to complete the program. The unfortunate thing was that this particular rehab didn't end up providing me with the tools and skills I needed to affect any change. I drank the day I got out. So I was left significantly in

debt (I had no insurance to pay for the rehab), no job and no more skills to cope with life than I had going in. Ouch.

Four more years of feeling worthless and hopeless passed and one day, in October 2012, I got VERY sick. Alcohol-induced pancreatitis. I was hospitalized for five days. While there, though, I was given a gift. A social worker came to see

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## The SMART Recovery 4-Point Program®

The 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:** Building and Maintaining Motivation
- Point #2:** Coping with Urges
- Point #3:** Managing Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors
- Point #4:** Living a Balanced Life

me and told me about a medical resource. That resource led me to a subsidized rehab. The counselor at that rehab told me about SMART Recovery. The cycle was broken.

SMART Recovery was like a light at the end of a long tunnel. It makes sense to me! For me, it's incredibly empowering. With the help of SMART, I'm working to change my beliefs to healthy and useful ones, I think about things in a more productive and effective way, and I see the world so differently. I learn new things every day. Now, I finally have tools. I have hope. I have an intense feeling of gratitude.

So, what am I grateful for? So much. But today, I wrote down SMART Recovery.

## The journey to recovery starts with a single step

by Chandler Kanozak, [chan.kanozak@gmail.com](mailto:chan.kanozak@gmail.com)

To this day I'll never understand what led me to SMART Recovery. I'd been attending outpatient services for my alcohol abuse for a long time before making it to SMART. There it was brought to my attention about a new meeting in the area and that I might want to be part of a new movement in our area for recovery. I wrote this off at first, naturally. I'd been advised to engage in other support groups and resisted them as well.

I was bartending at the time and saw no way out. I wanted to be sober but I didn't want to get sober. It is far easier wishing for something instead of going out and getting it. I used the self-defeating thought that I was a recovering alcoholic by day and bartender by night. That this was how it had to be and that nobody would listen to me because of it.

Not being able to drive stood in my way at times from obtaining blind faith and giving meetings a try. Upon waking one day, I began feeling spontaneous and adventuresome, this was a day for an escaping hike, a day to leave my concerns behind and see what could happen. I didn't know what I was doing but decided to do it anyway. It was an engrossing eight-mile walk to the meeting. I set out in the morning with nothing but a hiking pack with clothes, an apple and what was left of my heart that had been drowning for too long.

It was bitter cold on this fall day. I'd come upon a herd of wild turkeys crossing the street into someone's driveway. Their cat began playfully chasing the turkeys as I stood and watched. I smiled and chuckled to myself. This sort of thing was not an honest or usual occurrence for me so pressing on I saw hope. Every step was going toward something new. Instead of

remaining in a continuous standstill with life, I walked with hope. The cold and the winds were crippling at times. I figured if I couldn't make this trek, how would I ever make it through the heavy journey into honest recovery?

I reached my destination, going to where our meeting facilitator had an office at the Maine Alliance for Addiction Recovery. Going there to find the meeting location was daunting and nerve racking, but I'd come this far so I went to find out where the meeting would be.

After this, I continued attending SMART meetings regularly, minus the eight-mile trek. It was becoming clear that my life could change if I wanted it that badly and the people in meetings would listen regardless of where I was at any given moment. Months later my discontent had become intolerable. Simply abstaining wasn't the answer. I needed to expedite the willingness I possessed for lasting sobriety.

I gave in, signed up for a residential treatment program, quit my job tending bar and packed my bags. I gave up nothing and embarked on a path to get everything. I returned re-emerged and refreshed. A song from the 1960's called Someone Like Me by The Shadows of Knight comes to mind, quoting:



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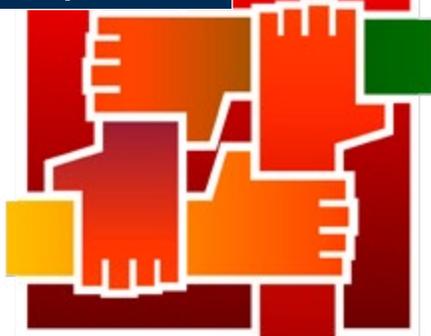
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"You said you want someone to play with but your playmates are hard to find. Sometimes you don't come back to stay with. If its cool but it's the right time. It's so easy I'll lead the way. With what you need to get peace of mind. Someone like me, you need someone like me."

Recovery isn't easy, by any means. Yet I feel I've found people and a place that'll make it easier to get peace of mind from addiction in SMART Recovery. It is always the right time to take the necessary steps to get to where we want to be, even if we must walk eight miles for it. I've been training to become a facilitator since my return from treatment. I am a father, I am determined, I am loving and I am in recovery. I am a sober person today and I need someone like me today and tomorrow. The rest has yet to be written.

## People Power



## SMART Recovery Annual Conference "Leading the Way in Innovation"

Humphrey's Half Moon Inn  
San Diego, October 11-13, 2013

We're looking forward to an educational and fun conference this year.

Whether you're a volunteer, a participant, a clinician or a friend of SMART Recovery, the Annual Conference is your chance to fully experience what it means to be a part of this international community of people working to help others create positive change in their lives.

This year, we're returning to the beautiful Humphrey's Half Moon Inn in San Diego.

### Conference Highlights

#### FRIDAY

We'll kick off the weekend with an optional afternoon sightseeing tour, followed by dinner and an evening of socializing by the pool.

#### SATURDAY

On Saturday morning, our focus will be on "Science and SMART Recovery," with speakers Richard Phillips, director of SMART Recovery U.K.; Reid Hester, PhD, creator of Overcoming Addictions, a web-based app; and Steve Hickman, PsyD, clinical researcher on mindfulness-based stress reduction.

Saturday afternoon will be devoted to "Tool Training" and the newest developments at SMART Recovery worldwide, including:

- SMART Recovery for aboriginal communities
- Emergence of new specialized meetings throughout the U.S.
- The new Online Teen Program
- SMART Family & Friends meetings
- Newest resources and developments at SMART Recovery Online



The afternoon presentations will be capped with a look at the organization's plans for future development and growth, presented by SMART President Tom Horvath, PhD

#### SATURDAY EVENING

We'll meet for dinner and celebrate the 2nd Annual SMART Recovery Community Awards Recognition Ceremony. This event will be held at the San Diego Yacht Club and is being sponsored by AtoN Center. Check out the awards categories on page 4.

We'll return to Humphrey's to close out the evening with the ever-popular, highly competitive and loads-of-fun SMART Jeopardy team competition, hosted by a dead-ringer for Alex Trebek.

#### SUNDAY

Sunday morning's agenda will feature a dynamic presentation by David Saenz, PhD on "Locus of Control &

Self-Empowerment.” Presentations on meeting facilitation skills and a panel of master facilitators will round out the event.

### Scholarships

SMART Recovery is proud to offer a limited number of scholarships to help defray lodging and registration expenses for those who would otherwise be unable to participate. For more information and to apply, visit <http://goo.gl/4fu2X>. Early applications are encouraged; deadline for submission is August 1.

### Conference registration and hotel reservations

More information, including conference registration and hotel reservations, will be available soon at [www.smartrecovery.org/sandiego2013](http://www.smartrecovery.org/sandiego2013).

Space is limited so register early!

The 2013 Annual Conference is sponsored, in part, by generous donations from:



## SMART Recovery 7th Annual Conference information & nomination form “Leading the Way in Innovation”

FRIDAY, OCT. 11 – SUNDAY, OCT. 13, 2013

**Humphrey’s Half-moon Inn, San Diego, CA**

### 2ND ANNUAL SMART RECOVERY COMMUNITY AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

#### AWARD CATEGORIES

1. SMART Recovery Volunteer of the Year  
Awarded to an individual who has made a truly significant contribution of time and energy to SMART Recovery in any role, from behind-the-scenes to the front lines, in the past year.
2. SMART Recovery Innovator of the Year  
Awarded to an individual who has made a truly significant contribution to shaping the program or development of SMART Recovery in any capacity, from research to technology to marketing, etc. in the past year.
3. SMART Recovery Leadership Award  
Awarded to an individual who has made a truly significant contribution of time and energy to SMART Recovery in any kind of leadership capacity, whether on a local, national or international level, in the past year.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Nominations for awards are open to the SMART Recovery community at large (online, face-to-face, behind the scenes, committee members, international, BOD, Central Office, etc.)
2. You may not nominate yourself for an award
3. Awards to be announced and presented during the conference on Saturday, Oct. 12, 2013, during the Dinner and “SMART Recovery Community Awards Recognition Ceremony.”
4. No cash value associated with any award
5. Please complete all information
6. **DEADLINE for nominations is Sept. 1, 2013**
7. Nominees will be contacted via email before the event, including a special invite to the event and the option of being recognized in SMART Recovery promotional material (They may choose to remain anonymous – this will not impact their chances of winning!)
8. Winners will be notified via email AFTER the event
9. Email completed form and any questions to Patrick G., Master of Ceremonies, at [patrickg1200@gmail.com](mailto:patrickg1200@gmail.com)

*\*\*Please be advised that your name and other contact information may be printed in the conference brochure or distributed on other mediums (i.e. News & Views, SMARTCAL) for promotional purposes unless you explicitly inform the Conference Committee you wish to keep some or all of your personal information confidential.\*\**

### Awards nomination application

**Your name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation(s) with SMART: (e.g. Message Board volunteer, member of Materials Review Committee):

\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been involved with SMART Recovery? \_\_\_\_\_

For how long, and in what capacity, do you know your NOMINEE?

\_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Affiliation (optional—your employer / professional credentials): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing  
address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail (required): \_\_\_\_\_

**NOMINEE'S name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation(s) with SMART: (e.g. Message Board volunteer, member of Materials Review Committee):

\_\_\_\_\_

How long has the NOMINEE been involved with SMART Recovery? \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Affiliation (optional—employer / professional credentials): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing  
address:

(if available) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Which AWARD are you nominating this person for? (please select only 1 award category from above)

\_\_\_\_\_

Brief statement of why your NOMINEE should be selected to win this award (max. 250 words):

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional information, if any:

\_\_\_\_\_

*\*\*Please be advised that your name and other contact information may be printed in the conference brochure or distributed on other mediums (i.e. News & Views, SMARTCAL) for promotional purposes unless you explicitly inform the Conference Committee you wish to keep some or all of your personal information confidential.\*\**

## Call for nominations: The Joseph Gerstein Special Award for Exemplary Service to SMART Recovery

by William M Abbott, M.D., Gerstein Award Committee Chair

At the 2012 SMART Conference a new award of special significance was announced and awarded. This award is given in recognition of an individual who, for many years of extraordinary and exemplary service in behalf of the growth and dissemination of the SMART program, has greatly and significantly enhanced these goals. The name of the award was that of a person who filled those criteria in every manner imaginable, SMART's founding president, Joe Gerstein.

The Joseph Gerstein award selection committee is now calling for nominations for the 2013 award. If you have someone in mind that you feel is justly deserving of such recognition please submit their name plus reasons for selection in letter format in 300 words or less to Shari Allwood, [sallwood@smartrecovery.org](mailto:sallwood@smartrecovery.org). Nominations must be received by Aug. 15, 2013. The recipient will be announced at the 2013 annual conference.

There is a cash award with this recognition. This is meant to support

SMART-related activities of the awardee such as travel to meetings, research expenses or further education in the field. A brief report on the use and benefits of the award is to be given in writing or at the annual SMART conference.

A brief description of Joe Gerstein's many contributions will serve as a framework for identifying a worthy candidate.

Joe is a retired MD internist in the Boston area. While in practice, he saw many patients who had addictive problems with opiate pain medication. In his search to find help for these patients, he learned of a program started in California known as Rational Recovery. He learned that it was different from the only other recovery groups at the time, which used the 12-step, faith-based model. Rational Recovery was science-based and secular. Joe embraced this idea and started RR meetings in New England — one of the first places to offer Rational Recovery meetings outside California.

Working with several others, he contributed to the wider acceptance and growth of RR throughout the United States. In 1991, Joe and many other active leaders formed a separate organization that, in 1994, became SMART Recovery, a nonprofit organization. Joe served as its first and founding president.

Over the past 20 years, Joe has worked tirelessly in furthering the goals of SMART in the U.S. and internationally. He was responsible for the growth of the program in New England, facilitating many meetings over time — now nearing 3,000. He continues his involvement in SMART as a member of the Board of Directors.

His other accomplishments include:

- Introducing SMART into communist Vietnam.
- Playing an instrumental role in getting SMART started in Australia and continues to serve on its Board of Directors.
- Helping to establish SMART in the United Kingdom and keeping it alive through difficult times.
- Helping to get SMART started in South Africa, now making SMART available in six of the world's seven continents (Antarctica is next).

A candidate for this award will have remarkable attributes such as long and continued service in other areas of SMART, adding significantly to the science and evidence-base foundation that supports SMART's concepts and Tools, championing significant new initiatives and working energetically and creatively to support SMART's activities.



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## SMART Ideas

### An inspiring story about rain from sunny Florida

by Mary Lou and Gilbert Cruz, facilitators, South Florida, U.S., [smartrecoverysouthflorida.com](http://smartrecoverysouthflorida.com)

We weren't quite sure what to expect when we received a query from one of the substance abuse specialists at the county addiction recovery facility. She wanted us to speak to one of her outpatient relapse prevention groups. We showed up with a SMART Recovery purposes and methods poster, flyers and business cards in hand.

The counselor welcomed us into her office and explained that while the outpatient treatment center primarily refers clients to 12-step meetings, she was hoping to provide them with some other options.

We asked what her expectations were for our presentation — whether she was looking for meetings to be brought to clients or if she merely wanted an additional resource in the community to refer them to. It turns out she wanted the latter, so we created a presentation.

The counselor was so enthusiastic that she decided to extend invitations to two of her other counterparts who also brought their clients to our presentation. All in all, there were three counselors and about 30 participants — a mix of men and women mostly in their 20s and

30s from various backgrounds. We set up the room with two circles of chairs and a table at one end for our material, which included handbooks, etc.

Gilbert and I both have extensive 12-step backgrounds as former members of the Hospitals and Institutions subcommittee who took meetings into jails, inpatient detox and rehab centers for several years. As a result, we developed sort of an unscripted motivational speaking style where we relate personal experiences interspersed with

positive, empowering recovery material.

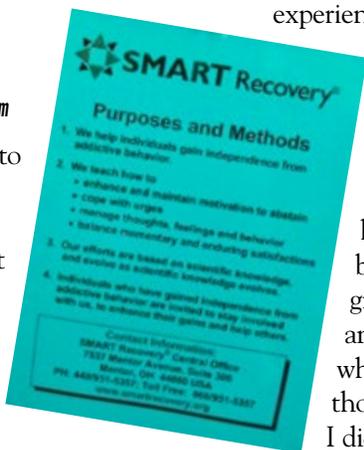
In his best "Bronzeze" Gilbert told them, "I don't know about you guys but all I know is that I grew up on the streets and when I was doin' what I was doin', I thought I was cool because I didn't want to be a square. And for more than

40 years, I kept doing this same motion (pantomimes stabbing himself in the arm or bending his elbow, hand to mouth)... Then, one day, it finally occurred to me that I was killing myself and I decided to stop. So someone took me to one of those other meetings and I kept hearing that I not only had to stop doin' what I was doin' but I also needed to change this and change that; plus, I needed

to change people, places and things. But what I finally came to understand is that all I really needed to change was one thing: Me. I needed to change the way I think! And this is what attracted me to SMART Recovery because it doesn't tell me what to think, it teaches me how to think."

An anecdote or so later, Gilbert introduces me and as I look around the room and ask if anyone ever feels powerless? A few folks raise their hands and I call on the biggest guy to step forward and put out his strongest arm so I cannot easily push it down with two fingers (I'm a 65-year-old white-haired retiree). And I ask him to repeat after me, "I AM POWERFUL, I AM STRONG," and then ask him to say it again, only louder as I am applying slight pressure to his wrist with my two fingers. His horizontal stiff arm barely budes.

"Now, I want you to keep the same muscle tension and notice any difference when you say the opposite: I AM POWERLESS, I AM WEAK!" The



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moment he does this, of course, his arm goes down a few inches and it is clear to everyone watching what has happened. “You see that? When we tell ourselves negative, disempowering words like I’m no good, I’m not worthy, etc., the body responds accordingly.” I have learned that what I think and say not only affects me but how I feel also produces my actions. So, when I take actions based on unhealthy feelings, I am more likely to get unhealthy results, right?

“So, if I want to change what’s going on out here (motions with outstretched arm and twisting hand), then I have to do what? (looks around the room making sure the audience is following my gestures). I have to unravel it and figure out what feeling or emotion caused me to take that unhealthy action in the first place and then rewind it a step further to discover what thought pattern or belief (the story I was telling myself at the time) helped create that chain of events in the first place. Because if I change the story I tell myself, it will make me feel differently and when that happens, I am more likely to take different actions that will allow me to connect my dots differently and bring me different results in life! Sounds simple, right?

“This is how important self-talk is and, to me, this is what SMART means in a nutshell.” I hold up a printout that reads:

***If you don’t like something about your life, change it.  
If you can’t change it, change the way you think about it.***

I tell them that SMART Recovery is about the power of choice. I explain an ABC and give them an example by relating a simple story about rain: A person on one side of a street looks out the window and says, “*Oh crap! It’s raining. I hate the rain; it’s yucky and messy and traffic always backs up. What a miserable day.*”

Another person on the other side of the street looks out the window and says, “*Oh wow! It’s raining. I love the rain. Now my grass will be greener and my garden will grow, and I love the way everything smells fresh and feels energized after the rain. What a peaceful, rainy day.*”

Same street. Same rain. Except there are two perspectives about the same event. The rain isn’t different, but the stories that the two people tell them-

selves about it cause the difference in how each one feels about the rain and how they react to it.

I tell them this is a simplified version of an ABC. In this case, the rain is the activating event. The belief is the story each person chooses to believe about the event and is what created their different feelings, or consequences. Neither of them could change the rain but they each had complete control over the story they told themselves about it. They each had the power to modify their beliefs, cause a shift in perception and thereby create a whole different experience of the same activating event.

“What’s really great about an ABC is that the same formula can apply to every aspect of life, not just recovery from substance abuse but because I am

## SMART Recovery® Tools & Techniques

SMART’s 4-Point Program® uses many tools and techniques that may help you gain independence from addictive behavior.

We encourage you to learn how to use each tool and to practice the tools and techniques to help you progress toward Point 4: Living a Balanced Life.

**These tools include:**

- Change Plan Worksheet
- Cost-Benefit Analysis
- ABCs of REBT for urge coping
- ABCs of REBT for emotional upsets
- DISARM (**D**estructive **I**mages **S**elf-talk **A**wareness and **R**efusal **M**ethod)
- Brainstorming
- Role-playing and Rehearsing
- Hierarchy of Values

aware of what's going on up here (points to head), I have a better understanding of why and how stuff happens. Then I am more empowered to get through it, no matter what it is. This is the true value of coping skills — they empower you to see there is always a choice — they motivate you to make different decisions.

“And before you know it, your life starts getting better and pretty soon you begin to feel a little happier because, for the first time in your life, you feel like you are finally in control of your thoughts, instead of the other way around. THERE IS ALWAYS A CHOICE! And you are the only one who gets to make that decision for you. Does that make sense?” (Reassured by eagerly nodding heads.)

We went over a few more tools, a brief description of the 4-Point Program® and details about our meetings, etc. We also mentioned that the smartrecovery.org site hosts a 24/7 chat room, online meetings and has tons of free downloadable material. Then, we held a short question and answer session.

- A young woman asked about the religiosity aspect of SMART. Response: “SMART works regardless of what personal beliefs or practices you hold because it's based on pure psychology, not spirituality.”
- A young man asked about how we got involved in SMART. Response: “One of my sponsees from the other program took me to my first SMART meeting. Six months later, I was facilitating.”

After a few more questions, I read the opening statement and Gilbert began the check-in process. We had some lively back and forth discussions. Many

people came up afterward to thank us. The counselor who invited us promised to share information about SMART with her other professional contacts.

We left by thanking everyone for attending and wishing them to have a SMART week!

## PR in Maryland goes a long way

by Hugh Delaney, Facilitator and Regional Coordinator

The activities in this northeast region of the U.S. focus mostly on PR work.

SMART Recovery presentations were given to two clinics and in master degree programs at two area universities. Another group of 10 addiction counselors at the Fort Meade Army post were introduced to our program. That group indicated an interest in starting three SMART meetings.

SMART was present at the 2013 Tuerk Conference, “Integrating Mental Health and Addiction Treatment in Maryland” in April. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence chapter and the University of Maryland Department of Psychiatry, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse host the annual conference.

Touted as the largest conference on the East Coast for addiction treatment, more than 1,500 professionals attended this year's conference. In 2012, SMART bought an exhibit table at the conference and we distributed about 300 copies of various SMART materials. This year, with strong support from the event hosts, we were given a free exhibit table and also asked to present SMART Recovery during the afternoon sessions. Not only did the preconference announcement mention our presentation but the program guide

also included information on understanding SMART Recovery.

The response to our table was overwhelming. We distributed 5,850 copies of SMART materials including “About SMART Recovery,” ABC and Cost-Benefit Analysis worksheets, local meeting information, the Stages of Change, the oxygen mask rule and an article called “An Alternative Perspective to Steps.” With a set of 10 books (including the old SMART handbook) as a giveaway, we collected more than 400 names and email addresses of area professionals. As the table was busy explaining SMART Recovery, we were totally amazed by the afternoon sessions.

After a lunch break, the afternoon was divided into two 90-minute sessions. During each session there were nine presentations from which attendees could choose. To our amazement, more than 130 people attend the first session! The presentation was formatted around the history of SMART, Tools of SMART, how meetings are conducted and why a person in the profession selected SMART as a resource. Dr. Joe Gerstein and I covered SMART materials with Bridget Mixon, who presented her thoughts as a professional.

Many thanks to Joe, Bridget and Carl Royer for helping with the conference. It took many hours to put this together and continue with after-conference marketing. Yes, it did involve substantial costs but the tangible result came from more than nine people committing to starting SMART meetings.

Public relations and outreach do work. It just takes time, effort and sometimes, money.



## SMART Progress

### SMART Recovery Online Update

#### A reason to give back and donate

by *AnniesOK*, SMART Online Volunteer

April was Volunteer Month at SMART. Why does SMART Recovery Online (SROL) need volunteers? Websites, online meetings and chat rooms don't just happen. They need people's commitment of time and financial support. You might think it's a great service, but why get involved?

Just over four months ago, when I first came to SROL, I truly had no purpose in life. I was depressed. I was on a two-year drinking binge and addicted to cigarettes and obsessive thinking. I was facing a health crisis and contemplating how I would feel if the verdict came in that I was to die. I really didn't care. But, what worried me more was to continue living the way I was. And that thought alone set me on the path of change.

I committed to change. I gave up drinking 130 days ago. I gave up smoking 97 days ago. I no longer isolate myself. I have a couple of close friendships and many wonderful people to share time with. The benefits are enormous — my health, marriage, and work relationships improved. None of this would have been possible had I not had the support of SROL. Today, I believe I have the tools to stay sober, off the cigarettes and keep my mind balanced. I want to be here because I love being here. I don't think I have missed a day since I have joined.

As a thank you to SMART and all the volunteers and facilitators who helped me get this far, I decided to give back. First with my time by becoming a volunteer. Then I realized SMART takes money to work. I did a few calculations and realized just how much money I have actually saved by not using: \$1,560 in alcohol plus \$1,600.50 in cigarettes, making my total saving \$3,160.50 in about four months. How amazing is that?! This doesn't include the out-of-control internet shopping I did while drunk and all of the other crazy spending.

If I break \$3,160.50 down to a weekly cost, it's \$199.50 per week, just to drink and smoke. So, here is my challenge. I have already donated \$200 as my thank you to support the volunteers. That might sound like a lot, but ummm hello, I was spending that EVERY WEEK on using and had no problem doing that. So the bar has been raised now to meet a \$1,000 goal — and an anonymous donor will match that. SROL needs less than \$200 to reach that goal. So, anyone who tells me they will donate, any little bit, or sign up to volunteer, I will donate a further \$10 per pledge.

Editor's Note: During April is Volunteer Month, seven people volunteered to help with online activities, nine were approved, including two who volunteered in late March. We also had two new online meetings begin in April. Eighty-one people applied for Distance Training Scholarships. This will result in many new face-to-face and online meetings.

Our summer distance training events will be busy and productive. Our initial goal to raise \$780 (\$10 per online volunteer) in a matching pledge then expanded to the \$1,000 matching pledge, which generous donors exceeded, bringing in \$3,001 for SROL!

If you'd like to donate, visit [www.smartrecovery.org/donate/](http://www.smartrecovery.org/donate/).

### SMART satellite websites available

by *Ellen Krogh*, SMART Recovery Facilitator in Sweden and *Charlie Atwater*, SMART Recovery Webmaster

Is your local, regional or national group in need of a website, or would you like to update and simplify your website with Wordpress?

Sites are now available from the SMART Recovery Central Office. Ellen has made a starter site and hosting has been arranged for ready-to-use sites available for your local area.

These websites are preloaded with Wordpress and SMART Recovery content, and ready to customize for your area. You can choose among many templates to create your style and features.

These sites include:

- Graphics
- Display messages, articles, and meeting schedules for your local participants
- Daily automated backup
- Data restore support
- Ease of editing and updates with Wordpress
- Wordpress roll-back and undo features

Do you wish your site had mobile capability? Wordpress templates make going mobile a breeze.

SMART Recovery will keep your URLs safe from roll-offs, keep your name anonymous, and will host your site on our servers.

Best of all, a full year of service is a flat \$100 per website, which includes updating the local URL, hosting, and all the features listed above.

Check out samples at [www.smartrecovery.net](http://www.smartrecovery.net), [www.smartrecoverysverige.org](http://www.smartrecoverysverige.org) (this one displays really well on mobile devices)

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and [www.smartrecoverychicago.org](http://www.smartrecoverychicago.org) to see these sites' styles.

To get started on your site, email [websites@smartrecovery.org](mailto:websites@smartrecovery.org).

## Exposure and response enhancement

by Hank Robb, PhD, ABPP

Many people think the point of addressing addictive behavior is to get something to stop. In the world of psychological treatment for anxiety, there is even a procedure called “exposure and response prevention.” The idea is to expose yourself to a situation in which you regularly become anxious, rather than avoid such situations and then “prevent” yourself from engaging in your usual escape response. The idea is that, after a while, you can nonanxiously address these situations in your life without feeling compelled to either avoid or escape them. These ideas might seem just the approach to be used with addictive behavior as well.

Let's face it. Doing self-defeating behavior is, by its very definition, self-defeating. And surely it is desirable to stop defeating yourself. However, I suggest life is a little more complicated than this and the reason SMART Recovery includes Point 1, Building and Maintaining Motivation,” it's about building something rather than stopping something.

Imagine a picture that symbolizes the life you want for yourself. Of course, everything in that life can't be in your picture. That's why I suggested the picture function as a symbol — perhaps the way a family crest is supposed to symbolize the family members who wear it. Once you have a picture that can

## Call for nominations!

Do you know someone who would be a great addition and resource to the SMART Recovery Board of Directors? If so, nominations are due by August 1st. Additional information and the nomination form can be found here [www.smartrecovery.org/resources/pdfs/BODnom.pdf](http://www.smartrecovery.org/resources/pdfs/BODnom.pdf)

function as a symbol of the life you want for yourself, try this experiment:

Hold one of your arms straight out with your palm facing toward you. See if you can project your picture, the symbol of the life you want to be living, onto the palm of your hand. If you can do this, look down your arm and find all the activities that fit with your symbol. What you may also notice is a lot of activities on either side of your arm — activities that simply don't fit with the life you want to be living. I'm willing to bet your addictive behavior doesn't show up on your arm because it doesn't line up with what you want your life to be about.

The point of this exercise is to help you see that by enhancing the responses that fit with the life you would choose, the things that don't fit will take care of themselves. Consider urges. When an urge shows up, do you only want to resist acting on it, or are there things you could be doing that actually fit with that Big Picture image of the life you want? Things you could do even while you are having that urge? A life with no negatives will only be a life at zero and that isn't really that great. A really great life is one with positives. By doing the things that fit with the life symbolized by the image you created, you are generating those positives — positives in the long run rather than positives only for the short run.

So, urges to do your addictive behavior show up. Rather than ONLY preventing yourself from acting on those urges and engaging in your addictive behavior, choose to engage in one of the behaviors that makes you the worker, friend, mate, sibling, offspring, parent or whatever you would choose to be. Choose to behave in a way that fits with the symbol of the life you deeply want to be living. By doing so, you will be moving from simply preventing particular responses to enhancing other responses. The more you enhance your ability to do the behaviors that fit with the life you want to live, the more you will actually be living that life. So, step out and expose yourself to the difficulties that come with being alive and enhance the responses that produce really living!



## President's Letter

### Authoritative Facilitating, Part 2

In this part, we'll focus on the next two elements of the basic SMART Recovery meeting: Agenda setting and discussion. We will focus on the final two elements, pass the hat and pass the brochure, and

checkout, in Part 3 in the October newsletter. Later parts will focus on enforcing basic meeting rules and staying out of “dead zones.”

Agenda setting is the moment when the group decides how it will spend its time at that meeting. In most meetings, the group quickly approves what the facilitator proposes. The challenge for the facilitator is to propose one or more topics of interest to this group, even though group members may not be forthcoming about what they want.

“Thanks for that check-in. Let’s set the agenda for this meeting. Does anyone have a personal recovery issue you would like to discuss with us?”

In the face-to-face meetings I have facilitated, less than half the time does a participant volunteer an issue. Now what? It is easy to imagine an inexperienced facilitator feeling tension or panic if no one has an issue to discuss. I suggest that the new facilitator bring a handout from the SMART website or Handbook, or from another suitable source to feel confident that, even if no one seems interested in becoming more involved in the meeting, you have someplace to take the discussion.

Additionally, all facilitators can be attentive to possible discussion topics that arise during check-in (with luck, some have), and be willing to ask the participant if their check-in could be the focus of the discussion. You can observe the nonverbal behavior during check-in to get a sense of what topics might be of general interest. Because agenda setting is so crucial to the meeting’s success, later we will focus on getting out of dead zones by using a round-the-circle variation of any of the SMART Recovery tools.

If several issues emerge, you need to establish how much time will be allotted to each one, or ask if one can be deferred to another meeting. You may need to negotiate about which issue is most pressing. However, the much more common problem is no issues to discuss rather than too many.

Having established that a specific participant’s issue is to be the focus, it is generally appropriate to gain more information about it from the participant. Be careful that a monologue does not ensue. In some cases, however, you may be able to formulate a question to the group. For instance, “Ray, thanks for volunteering. Group, Ray told us, during check-in, that he has felt strong cravings recently. He has increasing fear he will relapse. He is in his second month of abstinence. He had hoped it would be easier by now. Does anyone have a relevant experience to tell us about?”

As the discussion progresses you may introduce a Tool (perhaps in this case DISARM, an ABC or even a CBA), as a group exercise. If many participants are joining the discussion and it seems to be going smoothly, however, breaking that flow is not the best way to manage the meeting. We do not want to lose the focus on Tools, but it may suffice to summarize the discussion along the way, or at the end, in the form of a Tool.

For instance: “Thanks everyone. This has been an informative discussion, I hope for all and especially for you, Ray. SMART Recovery has a Tool that is relevant here, the ABC (you might identify the elements of the ABC at this point, if needed). I think we moved around between three different activating events of yours, and activating events from other participants. For your

“As,” we eventually realized that the “Bs” were similar. I would summarize the underlying belief this way, that when things get really bad I deserve to drink. We also considered several alternative beliefs, brought out in some of the other stories we heard. These beliefs included: I deserve NOT to drink; I can cope with this stress if I just focus on it; and life is already so much better I want to make it all the way to full recovery.”

A skillful facilitator will identify the underlying theme of a discussion as soon as possible and which Tool fits it best. Once the identification has been made, the facilitator can then guide the discussion indirectly, to help bring out the elements of that Tool.

If you use a Tool in this manner, you can keep the focus of a meeting on Tools without necessarily using them in a highly-structured fashion. A high level of structure can impede free-flowing discussion. As I suggested in Part 1: “Although learning the SMART tools is crucial, they often can be learned on one’s own. What can happen only in a meeting — or in online interactions — is hearing others, with similar experiences, share their hearts and minds.”

Part of your job as facilitator is to judge how much structure a group needs. The suggested guideline is to impart only as much structure as needed to keep up discussion.

*Part 3 in the next News & Views:  
Pass the hat and pass the brochure,  
and checkout.*

*Tom Howarth*

## Book Review



### The Myth of Sex Addiction

by Dr. David Ley, PhD

Reviewed by Nussbaum, SMART volunteer

"I did something for the worst possible reason. Just because I could."

— Bill Clinton

Back in February, a member of the closed Sexual Maladaptive Behavior forum created a thread about David Ley's book, *The Myth of Sex Addiction*. I decided to buy it so I could participate in the dialogue.

To be completely transparent, I'll begin with a few words about myself. Sticking to the addiction paradigm, I had a major relapse last year and have been working my recovery by reconnecting with SMART and through intensive therapy. The personal costs have been high to my wife and me, so the topic of sexual addiction is one that is very close and personal.

I began reading Ley's book intrigued by the idea that sex addiction isn't a legitimate diagnosis, especially because the current DSM does not include it as a generally accepted psychological condition.

His major thesis is that emphasizing sex addiction may actually be a barrier to getting to the more hidden forces at work within a person because treatment tends to focus on stopping the sexual behaviors — drawing boundaries, fighting urges, for example.

Ley's book distills down to these concepts:

There is no scientific evidence supporting the notion that a person can be addicted to sex.

The sex addiction industry, while populated with people genuinely interested in helping people in need, is not based on scientific research or findings, and tends to be based on anecdotal and religious influences.

The concept of sex addiction tends to shift responsibility from the individual to a condition over which they have little, if any control.

Addiction is often applied to sexual behavior that falls outside the acceptable range of Western religious tolerances.

Infidelity, promiscuity, lurid fantasies and experimentation are normal parts of human sexuality and are not indicators of psychological problems.

At no time does Ley deny the heavy personal and social costs that may be associated with sexual behaviors that are expressions of deeper psychological issues.

"A diagnosis of sex addiction is superfluous at best and a dangerous distraction from the real treatment needed at worst" (page 47).

Ley uses several recent examples — Tiger Woods, Bill Clinton and Dominique Strauss-Kahn, among others — to illustrate how the press and public respond to sexual escapades. But he also draws on people from history to illustrate the strong correlation between power and sexuality.

Basically, Ley's premise is that normal male sexuality is characterized by the desire for multiple partners, infidelity, fantasies and visual stimulation. It's the same drive that makes men aggressive and focused on achievement.

But this doesn't excuse men or women from behaving badly. Just

because we're wired for this type of behavior doesn't mean that we can't — or shouldn't — exercise self-control around our sexual behavior when necessary. As he points out several times, men and women have often behaved badly because they believed they could get away with it, not because they couldn't control themselves.

I think it's safe to say that Patrick Carnes, regardless of any scientific shortcomings, helped raise the visibility of sex addiction concepts over the past 30 years. His book, *Out of the Shadows*, is a standard read for anyone interested in the topic regardless of where you stand on the issue. He certainly raised awareness that many people suffer in silence and isolation from the impact their sexual behaviors had on their lives.

I see Ley's work as a healthy challenge to what has become a popular and simplified explanation of what's really at work: normal sexual drive rather than a mysterious force that has overcome the individual. Ley's book is a scientific equivalent of hitting the pause button on the juggernaut of sex addiction as a legitimate psychological condition.

Ley didn't write a science text but a book for anyone with a serious interest in the topic. He excels at producing an accessible book. That's the bane of contemporary scientists — how to write text that can be easily digested by a wide audience while simultaneously meeting the more exacting scientific standards of specialists in a field.

According to my Kindle app, 20 percent of the book is devoted to endnotes and references. Ley liberally refers to studies and articles to support his points but uses a storytelling approach in his narrative to convey his message. Even if you strongly disagree with his conclusions and premise, it's a good read.

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Ley has influenced my thinking on this subject. Having gone through treatment for sex addiction, attending 12-step programs for years and having debated it within SMART for several years, I've approached this topic from many perspectives. Combining Ley's thinking, or at least my understanding of his concepts, with my current therapy and recent experiences, I've decided to strike sex addiction from my vocabulary. I'm even challenging the term "sexual maladaptive behavior."

It's not the sexual behavior that's maladaptive, but the use of sex as an expression of deeper psychological problems.

### **Rational Drinking: How to Live Happily With or Without Alcohol**

*Michael R. Edelstein, PhD, with Will Ross*  
Reviewed by Ron Henderson, [ronhenderson417@gmail.com](mailto:ronhenderson417@gmail.com)

Michael R. Edelstein is a San Francisco clinical psychologist with an in-person and telephone therapy practice. He's a Certified Rational Addictions Therapist and the San Francisco professional advisor for SMART Recovery. He is the author of the best-selling Three Minute Therapy, which has chapters on addictions and a variety of emotional problems. He trained with Dr. Albert Ellis and supervises addiction counselors in the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy/Cognitive Behavior Therapy treatment of addictions. Will Ross tutors REBT self-helpers and is the author and publisher of online REBT self-help materials. He is the webmaster and co-founder of [www.REBTnetwork.org](http://www.REBTnetwork.org), established in 2006 to promote REBT, and the life and work of its creator, Albert Ellis, PhD.

The book is easy to read and very well grounded in the works of Albert Ellis. The reader is given the chance to consider the choice of drinking or not drinking in a controlled, systematic way. Chapters such as "Nine Good Reasons to Control Your Drinking" and "Six Steps for Increasing Your Willpower" lay the foundation for the reader's self-discovery.

Rational Drinking: How to Live Happily With or Without Alcohol proposes, "There is one cause — and only one cause — of excessive drinking: the demand that you must avoid discomfort and you have to get the good feelings that come from drinking." The fact that we create false absolutes in life is key to the discovery that recovery is possible by changing our thoughts and actions.

In this book, Ross and Edelstein continue with the Three Minute Approach. This time it is called the Three Minute Exercise, an ABC approach to dealing with addiction. In moments of crisis one can use an ABC to defuse the situation, recognize the irrational beliefs, and remain sober. A very quick and powerful tool, the Three Minute Approach is presented in a simple and concise format.

As a relatively new facilitator, I found this book useful not only for

myself, but something I would recommend to my group members. The authors manage to present the concepts in a way that anyone interested in changing their drinking behavior can take the steps toward recovery on their own.



## International Development

### **SMART Recovery, Bray Ireland**

by Jill O'Neill, Facilitator

On March 6, I delivered a presentation on SMART Recovery to an audience of 135 people, including Bob Meyers of CRAFT fame, the Irish minister for

Primary Health, the mayor of Bray, a committee from the Drugs Task Force, representatives from two of the top addiction treatment centers in Ireland and lecturers who specialize in addiction studies at

Trinity College, Dublin and Maynooth College. It was great to have Bob Meyers present as he endorsed the good work behind the theory of SMART.



Bob Meyers and Jill O'Neill



Wayne at work in Phoenix Futures

My first SMART meeting was in Bray five days later. I facilitate two meetings a week. They are very productive and we believe that working together on the SMART Recovery program as a group divides the tasks and multiplies the rewards.

Thank you all for the support from SMART in getting me this far.

### Articles are welcome!

If you have a story or information you would like to see published in *News & Views*, please submit it to Rosemary Almond, Editor, [rosemaryalmond@gmail.com](mailto:rosemaryalmond@gmail.com)  
Unsolicited material is most welcome!

### SMART Recovery UK® update

**Editor's note:** Wayne wrote this article five days before being released from prison.

Hello! My name is Wayne Parker and I am a prisoner at HMP Kirkclevington Grange. I have been a SMART participant and co-facilitator of SMART Recovery meetings here for four months. I have previously been on the Therapeutic Community at HMP Holme House and then came to HMP Kirkclevington Grange. I had a couple of setbacks but with the help of DART (Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team) and SMART Recovery, I was able to get back on track.

We, as a group, take ownership of our meeting and once a discussion is going it flows freely from one person to the next. The group members feel free to discuss their lapses and relapses,

which is not something they would normally do in a prison group work environment. I think that is because we treat each other as people and not offenders/prisoners.

I think the SMART Tools are really good because they add to the tools we already have from DART.

I am going to be released in five days and am going to go to SMART Recovery on release because I get so much help from them. I am also hoping to train as a SMART facilitator.

### Australia SMART AU® update

by Josette Freeman

Hello from Sydney! The past few months have flown by and it's hard to remember all that we have been doing. Our facilitator trainings continue on a monthly basis and we have traveled in rural NSW and interstate when required. We have trained in Wollongong twice, Canberra in the A.C.T and Adelaide in South Australia. We are working toward getting a key SMART person in each state.

Our official evaluation of SMART Recovery Australia is nearing completion. The surveys will be handed out to facilitators and participants in the next couple of weeks. We hope to have it completed in a couple of months so Dr. Peter Kelly can present the results at the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs National Conference in Brisbane in November.

I have been asked to give a presentation on SMART Recovery for an Education Day for psychiatrists and addiction specialists next week. This should be an interesting experience and I hope these doctors will leave fully

informed about SRAU and refer more clients to the program.

Work is coming along on our indigenous manual. I have been working with two aboriginal women who are advising on language and art. They are going to get their clients to be part of it and try to get them to implement the 4-Point Program®.

### **SMART Recovery Alberta, Canada update**

by Curtis Boudreau

Hello to the SMART world from Calgary, Alberta, Canada

A few days after writing the *News & Views* update in March I ended up slipping and severely fracturing my ankle and snapping the thinner of the shin bones in two. Ouch! As a result, I put all of my presentations on hold but managed to host the weekly Monday and Wednesday meetings. Maybe next time I'll go to the doctor sooner than 15 days after the accident.

On June 7, I flew to Montreal where what I present to treatment centres was recorded by a professional videographer. I'm excited because I have been told that I seem to have found a way to successfully present our program to the world so people get a really good idea of what we have to

offer with our awesome SMART Recovery program. Look for the presentation at [www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org) this summer.

Tina successfully finished SMART training program and got the weekly Friday meeting at the Victory Foundation back up and running. We are now back to having meetings five days a week. Thanks, Tina!

Lisa told me that a new meeting in Cochrane, Alberta is in the works. Because Cochrane is so close to Calgary, this meeting will not only take care of the people living in and around Cochrane, many Calgarians will have a sixth weekly meeting to choose.

In the works is also a new meeting for Sundays. This one will be held at the Aventa Women's Treatment Centre and will be a women-only meeting. By the end of the summer, Calgary and area will have meeting availability seven days a week. This has been a dream and goal of mine since I started running SMART Alberta seven years ago. Go team!

***“Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.”***

— **Jim Rohn**

***SMART Recovery® relies on volunteer labor and donations. Please be generous with your time and money!***

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