

A. Thomas Horvath, PhD, President

In Honor and Remembrance of Emmett Velten



I will admit that I’m still reeling from the news of friend Emmett’s death. I enjoyed the opportunity to work with Emmett over the past 17 years, and our most frequent communications revolved around his editorial leadership of this, our quarterly *News & Views* newsletter. I didn’t have the heart to try to find a replacement for this issue ... it somehow seemed too soon, and my emotions were still a bit raw to try to work with a new editor. Hopefully by the fall issue, we’ll have found a volunteer to fill Emmett’s shoes – big shoes indeed. (I hereby take full responsibility for any typos, grammatical errors, imperfect editing skills, etc. contained in this issue.)

Emmett had a gift of being not only clever, but he was one of the most quick-witted individuals I’ve ever had the pleasure of knowing. I can’t tell you how many times I’d laugh to the point of tears at his emails. He was always precise, timely and on top of each issue of the *News & Views*, and he would often tease me about the self-imposed deadlines I’d force upon each of us. (He’d ask: “**MUST** the issue be available online on the first of the month it’s due for publication?”, and I would heartily reply: “YES!”)

In the most recent issue of the *News & Views*, we unveiled a new format, which includes inspirational stories being placed at the forefront of each issue. While we’ll return to that format in the fall, I believe that Emmett was an amazing inspiration to so many of us, and it’s fitting for him to be recognized at the forefront of this issue. I’ve asked some of those who were close to Emmett to share at least a few words about what Emmett and his work meant to them. Thus, tributes to Emmett follow, after which you’ll find additional inspiration from the many stories and articles in this issue.

Shari Allwood, Executive Director

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Tributes to Emmett Velten

I met Emmett in 1991, a few days after moving to San Francisco from Brooklyn. He graciously took me to dinner, oriented me to the city, and invited me to his weekly Rational Recovery meeting. This was the beginning of a warm, mutually-supportive, easy friendship until Emmett moved to AZ. In the years after his move we dined together a few times and communicated infrequently, but unfortunately largely lost touch. I loved Emmett's self-deprecating humor, his regular joking about his own irrationalities and his human foibles, and those of the human race. I was impressed with his conscientious work-ethic, which allowed him to publish many excellent books on REBT and on AI Ellis. We appreciated each other's orthodox REBT approach and occasionally referred prospective clients to each other. He had great respect for AI, the man and the brilliant psychologist, yet had no illusions about his fallibility. I missed Emmett after he moved and miss him much more now. *Michael R. Edelstein*

Emmett's book with Dr. Ellis was one of the first I read in 2009. The impact of that book on my personal development can't be overstated. *Egwene*

I met Emmett just about a year ago, and what a year it was. In that short amount of time, he had me helping out at his monthly lectures, putting together information sessions for the public about SMART Recovery®, writing press releases ... you name it, he had the energy for it. Sometimes I had to slow him down – and he was twice my age! His energy galvanized me, and the Phoenix SMART Recovery® community, to do something special with what we

had learned. Since his death, I have heard from so many people who loved him, from so many people he helped. I would turn to him whenever a thorny issue came up around our local meetings, and I know that many of our participants did too. People would join him at the gym, just to visit, or to laugh at some of the outrageous things he said. I recently learned from his local YMCA that he helped them write grants so that they'd be able to offer programs to kids. I miss him, and feel blessed to have had the opportunity to know him, to learn from him. Thank you, Emmett, for generously sharing your time and wisdom. *Ana*

I am so glad I had the privilege and opportunity to hear Emmett during his recent presentation to us online. I know from all that I've learned in the past ~6 months that SMART Recovery® wouldn't be what it is today without his presence. *KacieB*

Emmett was my therapist and introduction into REBT. I moved to San Francisco from the East Coast, where I'd pursued Cognitive Therapy for several months before moving to SF. After finding Emmett, and learning about REBT and the simple use of eradicating my demands, I gradually concluded that the Ellis approach streamlined Beck. (Not to make them competitors, as having Beck and Burns around keeps the analysts at bay.) Nevertheless, I should say that Emmett was a great vessel of rationality and joy in my life. I learned much from him. And even though in REBT we urge ourselves to look at the world in concrete, non-magical terms, I can at least say that Emmett is with me figuratively in all of the rational thinking and feeling I learned through him. If there's anything I can do to honor his

memory and continue to enjoy him it's to strive to solidify my own rationality even more, and spread the word that emotional suffering is created by ourselves, and thus eliminated by us also. I am lucky beyond description to have known Emmett, had him as a therapist, and kept in touch over the years. Sometimes people come into our lives, or we let them in, and they truly inspire us to change for the better. That is what Emmett will always mean to me. I hope to continue to learn, and to pass on the wisdom he embraced and taught me—to any and all, wherever I can. *Mick*

In the fall of 1987, my then relatively new officemate, Dr. Ricks Warren, got me to my first Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy meeting. Ricks and I had completed the supervisor training program in Rational-Emotive Therapy (now REBT) and at that AABT meeting, Ricks introduced me to a classmate from his RET training group, Emmett Velten. Our mutual interests led both Emmett and I to become active in the founding of Rational Recovery self-help groups and later SMART Recovery®. Like so many others, Emmett got his intellectual liberation from the writings of Bertram Russell. He got his physical liberation by entering the University of Chicago. His doctoral dissertation was published the year after he was granted his doctorate by USC, and in 1968 the Velten Mood Induction Procedure, which literally became world famous, entered the psychological literature. Emmett was so very quick witted and he could wield a very sharp tongue. He sometimes used his work in REBT to help him keep it in check. Nevertheless, it also could lead to a torrent of words that left you holding your sides with laughter and almost out

of breath. Fortunately, he never turned it on me! Time with Emmett was never boring and usually hilarious. When heads of his companions turned at the appearance of an appealing member of the opposite sex, he never missed the opportunity to announce, "You hetros are all alike!" I always thought it was his way of saying, "We're different, and we're all the same" – what sane person doesn't like sex?! I gave talks, conducted trainings and served on convention panels with Emmett. I wrote chapters for books he edited. My first *News & Views* column appeared in 2002 and the one in this issue will be the first one not edited by Emmett. Though often, especially in later years, the life Emmett lived was painful and difficult, he always seemed to be living it as fully as he could. I will miss him. *Hank Robb*

I knew Emmett for over twenty years and I will always remember his incisive yet accessible approach to teaching REBT. But more than anything, I remember his great sense of humor and pointed wit. No doubt he practiced USA and UOA, but he was quick to "judge the sin" if not the sinner. I remember in particular when Steve Hayes came out with his book on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and never mentioned AI. Emmett was beside

himself. He was equally unrelenting in his withering critique of other "discovers" of "new" psychological phenomena. So it was wonderful fun working with him, not only because he was a superb REBT practitioner but because he had a totally no-bullshit attitude, eloquently expressed with enthusiasm and exuberance. Finally, Emmett was a wonderful and extremely adept editor. When I first started writing, he was immensely helpful turning a rather poorly written piece of writing into something clear, direct, and informative. I will always be grateful. So those of us who knew him will miss him, and we will miss what he would have continued to contribute to SMART Recovery® and to REBT had he remained with us.

F. Michler Bishop

An ABC in Honor of Emmett

by Jonathon von Breton, Director, SMART Recovery® Online

As many of you know, Emmett Velten was a close friend of mine. We had known each other for over 25 years. I first met Emmett when I was studying REBT at the Albert Ellis Institute. We saw each other at various REBT related trainings, conferences and workshops. We always managed to spend some time together at these events.

Our friendship became much closer when we started doing the 'Emmett and Jonathan Show'. That was a three-hour training at the annual SMART Recovery® Conference. We covered the basic tools. There was even a video made of us in New Jersey (available at the SMART Online bookstore for a very reasonable price). Emmett, with my permission, based one of the characters in the book *REBT for People With Co-occurring Problems: Albert Ellis in the Wilds of Arizona* on me. We had gotten into the habit of talking on the phone twice weekly for mutual support.

This is one of my favorite Emmett stories: My plane was late for the first conference at which we were co-presenters. When I finally did arrive, Emmett greeted me with a warm smile and big hug. He then told me how he had de-awfulized the possibility that I had died in fiery plane crash. He convinced himself that it was merely inconvenient that he would have to do the whole training alone. He went on to tell me how he didn't damn me for dying in a plane crash and making him present by himself. After all, I was just a fallible, fouled up human and what else could you expect but that I would kick the bucket in a gruesome manner and leave him to do the whole show? Now that was a great, pre-emptive ABC!

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Emmett, like me, was a dedicated REBTer. His recent death was a huge personal loss and a loss to SMART Recovery®. Because he was such an avid practitioner of REBT, I think it only fitting that I do an ABC in his honor about his death.

A (Activating Event): My good friend Emmett Velten died unexpectedly.

B (Beliefs): What irrational nonsense might I be telling myself about this tragic event?

B1: Emmett shouldn't have died!

B2: It's awful that Emmett died!

B3: I can't stand not having my friend to talk to!

B4: I can't stand feeling this intense grief!

C (Consequences): How would I feel if I told myself this crap?

Depressed? No. **DEPRESSED!!!**
Yes!

D (Disputing Irrational Beliefs): How can I dispute the Bull Stuff I told myself at B?

D1a: Why shouldn't Emmett have died?

D1b: Does demanding Emmett shouldn't have died change the fact of his untimely demise?

D1c: Does demanding Emmett shouldn't have died make the fact of his death easier or harder to deal with?

D1d: Is there some stone tablet somewhere with an inscription guaranteeing that no one I care about will die?

D2a: Is Emmett's death truly awful?

D2b: Is it more than 100% bad?

D2c: Is the worst that has ever

happened to anyone ever?

D2d: Is Emmett's death worse than it should be?

D2e: Does saying this is awful help me feel better, or does it make me feel even worse?

D3: What proof is there that I can't stand not having my friend to talk to?

D4: Why can't I stand feeling intense grief?

E (Effective new belief or emotional consequence): What new self-talk and philosophy might be more rational and lead to healthier emotions?

E1a: There is no ***** absolute reason whatsoever that Emmett shouldn't have died. There is not only no evidence that he shouldn't have died, there is ample evidence that he did.

E1b: Demanding Emmett shouldn't have died changes nothing!

E1c: In fact, demanding Emmett shouldn't have died makes the fact of his death far harder to deal with.

E1d: There is no stone tablet anywhere except in my nutty thinking that guarantees no one I care about will die. The reality is quite the opposite. Many people and pets I cared about have died.

E2a: Emmett's death is not truly awful. It is bad and highly undesirable.

E2b: It's nowhere near 100% bad.

E2c: It is far from the worst that has ever happened to anyone ever.

E2d: Emmett's death is exactly as bad as it should be. It is certainly no better or worse.

E2e: Whining about how awful it is doesn't help me in the least. It makes me feel 1000 times worse!

E3: I'm not dead, although he is. So obviously I can stand it. Being able to stand it does not mean I like, approve of it or consider it as good.

E4: Of course I can stand feeling intense grief. Not only will it not kill me, it's a healthy reaction to such a major loss.

E (synopsis): I don't like it that Emmett died. But I can accept that fact without liking it or approving of it. It's bad enough that he did die and I'll never get to talk with him again. There is a huge hole in my life where my friend used to be. It is okay to feel intensely sad about that. I can also be glad that he didn't suffer more than he did. As unpleasant as it was, his death could have been a much longer and far more painful one.



President's Letter

Authors note: I received an early copy of this book as a courtesy from Emmett. Because I found the book inspiring, I offered this review to the authors and their publisher, to assist in publicizing the book to mental health professionals. The review is posted at www.prpress.com and www.practicalrecovery.com, and reprinted here. *Tom Horvath*

REBT for People with Co-occurring Problems: Albert Ellis in the Wilds of Arizona

by Emmett Velten, PhD, & Patricia E. Penn, PhD (with inspiration from the real Albert Ellis), Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Press, 2010

Perhaps you think Albert Ellis' REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) involves the mindless but forceful repetition of a few simple concepts. This book should change your mind. REBT, presented by Velten and Penn as RAPT (Rational Assessment and Personalized Treatment), is capable of deeply responding to the complexities and nuances of life.

Just as medical illustrations can be a better teaching tool than actual photos, the authors' constructed session 'transcripts' are an excellent tool for teaching the subtleties of REBT, particularly as applied to individuals with serious and combined substance and mental health problems. The transcripts are interspersed with highly helpful explanations of what is happening in the sessions and how it is being responded to.

The book is set as an imaginary visit to Arizona. Ellis visits several treatment settings and conducts ten demonstration sessions. These sessions illustrate how Ellis would work with a broad range of problems. The initial sessions are with the professionals themselves. Ellis asks them to consider how REBT could be applied to their own lives, and how their own lives are not fundamentally different than the lives of the clients they work with.

After working with a counselor depressed about not losing weight, and three counselors experiencing burnout, Ellis works with a methamphetamine user with psychotic symptoms, a woman with drinking problems diagnosed with

DID (dissociative identity disorder), a methadone client not getting 'take home' doses of methadone because of pot use, a man with a history of alcohol and LSD use now diagnosed with schizophrenia who is frustrated because people do not believe he has microchips installed in him, another counselor working in a prison feeling stuck in his job, and an alcohol using man diagnosed as having rapid cycling bipolar disorder and placed on a locked psychiatric unit.

There are also didactic presentations on counselor burnout, the realities and language of 'dual diagnosis' and 'co-morbidity' (leading to the conclusion that 'co-occurring problems' is the most sensible term), the best practices for dealing with co-occurring problems, the principles of RAPT, responding to seemingly hopeless and unmotivated clients, and SMART Recovery®.

There is even a 'radio interview' of Ellis as he addresses a popular audience about REBT. This book is ideally suited for professionals in the public treatment system, on either side of the substance abuse/mental health divide the authors hope to help end. Because of the rich clinical wisdom throughout this book, even experienced REBT practitioners are likely to admire and learn from it. Those who knew Ellis personally will re-experience him on these pages.

As noteworthy as the clinical wisdom is the humor. Ellis has a well-deserved reputation as a humorist, and Velten and Penn carry on this tradition. Their humor will be especially meaningful to public treatment system professionals, whose world is well understood by Velten and Penn. However, I suspect just about all readers will come away from this book as I did, laughing with my clients and with myself. To laugh and learn simultaneously, what a treat!

Inspirations



One Year Today

by Beachbound, Message Board Volunteer

A year ago this morning, I poured a half gallon of vodka and what was left from another half gallon of vodka, down the sink. I decided that enough was enough. I still replay the tape of how drunk I was the night before, and the awfulness of being told that I had blacked out, yet again. The shame, the fear, and finally accepting the fact that I needed to stop drinking. I gave in to what I knew was necessary. I've not turned back, have not been tempted to drink (I have thought what a nice escape it would be) but I've committed to staying sober. Drinking has only complicated my already complicated life.

I don't take it for granted that I will stay sober; I know that it is necessary to be vigilant. I know that becoming complacent is not wise as I continue this journey. For that reason, I recently became a message board volunteer. I'm giving back to the community that has given me hope, support, and have listened to me babble on and on. (I still babble, but not as much as I used to.) Things are s-l-o-w-l-y improving in my life and falling into place. I've slowly earned back the trust of my daughter, trust lost as a result of sneak drinking. I look forward to another sober year with her as she finishes up high school next year and will be planning for college.

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The marriage that I complained about for months? Not sure where it will go, but I sure as heck am not angry at him anymore. With anger out of the way, there's more room to find joy in little things. I'm still dealing with the climate issues where I live and struggle with seasonal affective disorder. I'm fairly active on LinkedIn and continue to make connections with those who are in my profession in the sunny states that I hope to return to.

None of the above would have been written a year ago. And the year went FAST! I learned that anti-depressants DO NOT WORK when you drink alcohol! The meds that I take for SAD work now! Sure I get discouraged, sad, mad...but I don't go as low as I used to go. The combo of the meds and booze did nothing but make me more depressed.

SMART Recovery® has helped me in that I've always felt that I had a place to turn where people "got it." My friends who aren't addicts have helped. And just like when I had cancer, with sobriety, I've learned who my friends are and are not. There's a lot of value in that. I've made new friends online and off.

I've not done a whole lot of reading nor used many of the tools...but I sure love that CBA! I have more goals, new goals, and while I drank all I could think of was how to escape my miserable life. (As if I was going to get anywhere while blacking out?) I have more hope than I've ever had regarding my future, especially since when I was diagnosed with cancer five years ago (the same year that my then 28 years old son was diagnosed). It was a tough year, we're both four years clean, and life goes on. Booze certainly helped me achieve my goal – my one

goal – which was to get numb. It worked well for a while, but it's certainly no way to live. I wanted to die. There, I said it. I no longer want to die. I feel as if there are too many oceans to see. If I die, I won't get to see them.

So today is a year. It feels, well, decent. In some ways it feels huge and in some ways it feels tiny. In some ways it's a special day and in some ways it's just another day. Kind

of like birthdays – when you're near your 58th birthday, it's sort of "just a day."

My main reason for posting is to show new people that there is hope. I was one of those "high functioning", didn't hit rock bottom, worked, didn't lose jobs, didn't get arrested, wasn't mandated to quit, etc. I simply decided that I was done drinking. I hope to be done forever but I truly do have a "one day at a time" attitude.

I think a lot – too much, at times. In the last year, I have VERY carefully, and thoughtfully, decided what parties/events to attend that might have alcohol. I've refrained from going to any of the neighborhood drunkfests. I have not done anything spontaneously where I know there is booze. I've brought my Zevia (natural diet soda) with me to a few parties. I arrived late and left early.

I've added more to my work-plate. I'm now a volunteer CASA/VGAL which takes up a chunk of time and is one of the best things I could have done. I'm less isolated and have made a few friends from the CASA program. There is always someone to talk to in the office and it complements my job as an adoption social worker.

So, this was an official babble. I'm celebrating with a new ring today (not expensive). When I started this "trip", I bought myself a silver ring that says: "The Journey of a Thousand Miles Starts with one Step". I never take it off. I play with it, read it, and get it into my head that this is not a game. This is my life. Life is getting better for sure – far from great, and far from horrid.

With peace and love in my heart, I wish all of you well on your journey. And I'll still be sticking around.



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Unconditional Self Acceptance (USA) Success!

by Blackeyed, SMART Recovery® Online participant, as posted on the Message Boards

Last night I had the pleasure of participating in Charlie's Tuesday night online Tool Time meeting on the topic of the USA tool. Later he went on to describe the extension of unconditional acceptance to others around us and to our life circumstances as well. I found the discussion very informative and was inspired by the potential change in my thinking which using such tools could bring about. Today, as luck would have it, a situation arose that was a perfect opportunity for me to put this tool to practice.

As I understood USA, the goal was to step away from the habit of holding yourself in high or low esteem based on a set of criteria, internally or externally placed, of what is good or bad. Instead it was suggested that we foster the belief that we are simply a fallible human being, making decisions based on our beliefs of what is the most effective action at a given point in time. Afterward, we can reflect on whether our decisions were more or less effective than we hoped and adjust our beliefs for future choices.

Two years ago, my life underwent a quick and drastic change. I had been a community leader based around a small school in which I taught and directed for several years. Then one day (to cut the long soap opera version down), I earned myself a DUI and within a week was canned and completely ostracized from the school and the community. Life got very hard for me for quite a while (homeless, jobless, carless, etc.) and what had been my community of mutual

support had shut me out. I've carried much pain and judgment around this event in my life toward myself, the community I was a part of, and the fairness of this happening to me at this point in my life.

That would be all there was to it, just a sad story of loss, were it not that my kids are still involved with the community and go to the school. After I managed to work myself back into a home and regain some custody of my children, I found myself daily passing many of these same people in running my kids back and forth to school. Even just seeing them and being seen by them has been very painful to me. I've tended to stay in my vehicle and avoid contact when I've needed to be at the campus. I've skipped all the functions including the kids performances that I wanted to attend and feel so sad to have missed. It's felt terrible to me as I've imagined myself a monster in the eyes of others and continued to reaffirm that perspective in my own eyes.

Today however, I made a different choice. I had no intention of attending my daughter's presentation at school today, even though she had expressed that she wanted me to be there. But after sleeping on the ideas discussed at the meeting last night I decided to be brave and make a change; make a decision that would make me feel better about myself. When I arrived, I encountered teachers and former students – some acknowledging and others avoiding me. I'm just a guy that can make mistakes, I repeated in my mind. I sat through the presentation and was very glad to have been there, for my daughter's sake and for my own.

I felt like I was making some progress with my acceptance of the situation

and decided to stay after the event and walk the grounds. I saw the faces of administrators and parents, who had condemned me and I thought to myself that whatever they may think of me now, I'm working to make peace with my past and build a better life for myself and my family. I'm not perfect, but I'm not a bad man.

I eventually stayed to the end of the day. Waiting for the kids in the lot at the end of the day provided another opportunity to work on this process of acceptance. I caught a glare from a community leader who was my most vitriolic of detractors. The degree to which I was alienated I've largely blamed on this person. She's not good or bad, I forced the thought into my head. She's a fallible human being ... even her, just another person who can make mistakes.

I can't say that the last push to unconditionally accept others was completely successful, but it did make a difference. I was able to be there, not shaking in rage or trembling with self contempt, but generally at peace.

Back at home, I sit down to write this to record my progress and keep me focused on my goals of greater health and clarity. Writing this brings to mind how much anger and despair has come up for me around the experience of the last two years. It's not just toward me or those who were part of these events; it goes beyond that to expand to life in general. God, the universe, karma, or whatever really screwed me over. It's not fair that I had to lose so much, when I had contributed so much over the years. Again, I return to my memory of last night's meeting and recall that there is no reason for me to believe that life should treat me any which way. I don't deserve a good or bad set of circum-

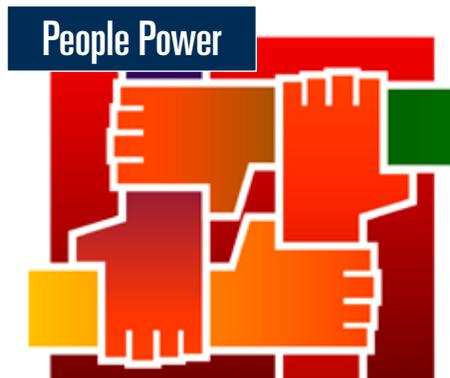
stances to come my way. And just as I start to try and accept that life just is the way it is, and all I can do is deal the best with what comes, my computer shuts down and lose this whole post. I decided to type it again.

My Head's a Mess

DanFM, one of our UK facilitators posted the following notice on the WiredIn blog, and we felt his post and the poem are definitely worth sharing! DanFM wrote: "I facilitated a SMART Recovery® meeting yesterday evening and one of the members, Mark, who has been in recovery for 14 weeks and a regular attendee at my meetings, brought the below poem on his feelings for SMART Recovery®. The reaction from the members present was stunning. One member was even moved to tears. Permission is granted to share this in our community."

My head's a mess
And there's no doubt
I need a drink
To sort it out
A sip or two
Will go down well
The path is set
The road to hell
The years of drink
It's getting worse
Dependency
Is it a curse?
A cry for help
Too much to take
A helping hand
It's make or break
A place to meet
And say a bit
To listen too
The candles lit

Our past alike
Our goals the same
Recovery
Don't take the blame
The trigger points
The urges too
They come and go
It's up to you
The early days
How they drag
Complacency
It's in the bag?
But piece by piece
It's taking shape
A light that shines
Make no mistake
Moving on
No time to tire
A brand new start
Meeting people, inspire.



Is a Challenging Situation a Threat or an Opportunity?

by Don Sheeley, Facilitator, Sarasota Springs, NY, as posted to the SMARTCAL listserv

I learned to kayak on the ocean without falling in, without nearly drowning. I learned how to cope with the dangers of kayaking ahead of time, by taking lessons and by reading books written by people experienced in sea kayaking. So, with lots of up-front learning and

gradually increasing experience, I managed to paddle a 15-foot kayak out on Atlantic Ocean waters day after day, and sleep on little islands. This was an opportunity to enjoy the company of seals, dolphins, osprey and my friend. I was aware of the threat of drowning ahead of time, so I learned from experienced people how to enjoy the opportunity while negotiating around each threat. The threats were real – 6 foot swells, plus 3 foot waves in 2 directions, etc. My friend and I practiced and practiced on warm lake waters over several months, before we went out on the ocean.

I'm glad I didn't have to learn how to rescue myself while I was in the icy cold Maine waters. It would be possible, and if I was lucky enough to have an experienced sea kayaker nearby, I could have been saved, maybe. Since self-rescue and friend-rescue learning takes time, I was glad to be able to prepare for the threats of kayaking so I could enjoy the sport.

Currently SMART Recovery® offers learning and a framework from which to approach effective living. It's too bad we wait until we are slipping into icy waters before we find and learn SMART Recovery®. Someday we should offer self-management training to give people the opportunity to align their behaviors with their goals and values, before the addiction sets in deeply. We could call this SMELT, Self-Management and Effective Life Training! (The name is a joke, so please, guys ...)

A bit of trouble helps motivate someone to learn. A lot of trouble can interfere with learning, which takes time and a level head.

Enjoying my vacation by the ocean,
Don

Gambling with Addiction

by Tom Larkin

“It isn’t that they can’t see the solution. It is that they can’t see the problem.” – G.K. Chesterton

Gambling and drinking alcohol interact and reinforce one another.

For most people, gambling and drinking are not self-defeating. However, about 80% of alcohol is consumed by about 20% of the drinkers and about 80% of money lost comes from about 20% of the gamblers. Disproportionately they are returning veterans, the less educated, minorities, the formerly incarcerated and mostly working people with moderate to low incomes.

Nevada has the highest per capita alcohol consumption rate. Lottery revenues in Massachusetts would decrease significantly if Keno machines were removed from drinking establishments. Lottery and casino managers understand full well that increased drinking leads to increased gambling profits.

Proponents of expanding gambling in Massachusetts attempt to minimize the gambling and drinking connection. They use outdated projections suggesting gambling addiction is insignificant, unique and manageable compared to alcohol problems. That is not true. According to the National Gambling Impact Study Commission (NGISC-1999) about one of three active gamblers have some level of mild, moderate to severe problem and the prevalence of this behavior will increase as availability increases:

Mild (at risk gamblers)-about 18% of active gamblers

Moderate (problem gamblers)-about 9% of active gamblers

Severe (pathological gamblers)-about 4% of active gamblers

Irrational instant gratification thinking drives all addictions. Alcohol disinhibits. It is considered a gateway to gambling and other related self-defeating behaviors and feelings including smoking, drug abuse, domestic violence, child neglect, suicide, increased debt, criminal behaviors and the intensity, duration and frequency of many emotional problems.

Over 50% of people with gambling problems are estimated to have alcohol and other drug problems. About 1/3rd of people with drinking problems are estimated to have gambling problems. Alcohol and/or drug use are involved in about 80% of arrests and incarcerations. About 30% to 40% of the incarcerated are estimated to have gambling problems. Repeated criminal activity is “a gamble”. It can be defined as a persistent, hard to change pattern of risky behaviors. About 2 out of 3 of the formerly incarcerated are rearrested within 3 years, according to a 15 state, 2002 US Justice Department study. For those who stay sober, recidivism rates drop to about 1 out of 3. Therefore, recidivism is clearly related directly to relapse.

Self-referrals for gambling problems are much lower (3%) when compared to people who self refer for alcohol (15%) and drug (25%) problems. It is reasonable to assume self-defeating gambling behaviors are underreported. Each pathological gambler cost society from \$10,000 to \$50,000 and interacts negatively with about 10 other people. The economic and social costs of gambling easily outweigh benefits by \$3 to \$1. (Grinols, **Gambling in America-Costs and Benefits**).

The NGISC found the number of pathological gamblers double within a

50-mile radius of new casinos. Expanding legalized gambling will significantly increase the number of pathological and problem gamblers. The promotion of gambling by government will confound efforts to treat alcohol and other interactive self-defeating behaviors.

Many elected officials fail to understand how addictions are acquired, interact and reinforce each other. Therefore, they can’t see the problem.

(Tom Larkin is a Licensed Psychologist, a SMART Recovery® Facilitator and President of United to Stop Slots in Massachusetts. Go to smartrecovery.org to find a free, self-help group. Go to USSMASS.org for predatory gambling information.)

Editor’s Note: Tom’s article was featured as an OPED piece in the May 28, 2011 Boston Herald.



SMART Ideas

Here’s a SMART Idea!

Plan to join us in Baltimore on October 7-9, 2011 for our Annual Conference. It’s going to be a terrific gathering. Based on space limitations in this issue, please visit: <http://www.smartrecovery.org/baltimore2011/index.html> for additional details, including agenda, registration, housing, optional tours, etc. All are invited and we look forward to your participation!

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The Box Game and How to Avoid It

by Hank Robb, Ph.D., ABPP

Individuals may, or may not, have responsibility for a problem and they may, or may not, have responsibility for solving a problem. For example, I am not responsible for the fact that it is sometimes very difficult for me to stay focused on things it would be good to focus on. I am responsible for staying focused anyway. I am not responsible for the lack of mass transit in US urban centers. I am also not responsible for solving it. If we combine each of these possibilities, we end up with four “boxes.” In box 1, a person is not responsible for a problem and not responsible for solving it. In box 2, a person is not responsible for a problem but is responsible for solving it. In box 3, a person is responsible for the problem but not responsible for solving it. In box 4, a person is responsible for the problem and is also responsible for solving it. In our culture we have generally agreed upon ways of responding to people in each of these four situations.

For those in box 1 (neither responsible for creating the problem or for solving it) we tend to respond with compassionate understanding and outside help. After all, the person didn’t do anything to end up with the problem and isn’t responsible for solving it either.

For those in box 2 (not responsible for the problem but responsible for solving it) we tend to respond with compassionate understanding and firmness. After all, the person isn’t responsible for being in their fix but is the one responsible for doing something about it. We can have compassion for their suffering but also stand firm in insisting they take charge of that which they can, indeed, take charge.

For those in box 3 (responsible for the problem but not responsible for solving it) we tend either to respond with disgust, after all they DID get themselves into the problem or with compassionate understanding and outside help.

However, those in box 4 (responsible for the problem and is also responsible for solving it) are typically blamed and

condemned. They SHOULD’N’T have done it and are no damn good because they did. Those slobs got themselves into the problem and why help slobs who SHOULD be taking care of things on their own?!

In many areas of life, and especially with “addictive behavior,” these four differing responses lead to what I call, “The Box Game.” If outsiders want to respond to an individual with compassion, then any box but 4 will do. Thus, we have various treatment approaches with one common theme; the person is not responsible for both the problem and the solution, box 4. They have a disease or require the intervention of a Higher Power or both. If an individual ends up in box 4, then compassion plus anything is out, and blame and condemnation is in. Worse yet, as members of the culture, we tend to do this to ourselves. Thus, people with particular types of histories, and especially those with a history of “addictive behavior” are loath to say they are both responsible for the problem and the solution because not only will others likely blame and condemn

SMART Recovery® Program Tools & Techniques

The SMART Recovery® 4-Point Program® 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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them but they will likely blame and condemn themselves! Better to be in a different box.

The problem with the Box Game is not that people might have diseases or require outside help. The problem is blaming and condemning individuals, be they ourselves or others, when we assess them as being both responsible for their problems and responsible for solving them. This response to those in box 4 makes it pretty darn hard to admit to being responsible for your problems and for effectively addressing them.

I suggest the wise solution to this issue is not a more sophisticated version of the Box Game. Rather, the solution is to change the response we give to those who are both responsible for a problem and for the solution of that problem. I suggest we respond with compassionate understanding and firmness – the response that normally goes with box 2. Why? Glad you asked.

The first reason is that it works a lot better. We are more likely to admit error and get busy working on doing something about that error if we are not blaming and condemning ourselves for being in the fix we are in. It would be a lot better if others were not blaming and condemning us as well, but working for change is just about impossible when we

agree with those who blame and condemn us and blame and condemn ourselves. Additionally, from the point of view of one who wants to be helpful to another human being, how helpful are you when you are blaming and condemning the very person you want to help? My experience is – not very.

Second, blaming and condemning is based on the false notion that screwing up in important ways makes a person no damned good. Try this thought experiment. Take blood from 100 people who have really screwed up in really important ways and do the same for 100 people who have not – at least not yet. Then send the 200 blood samples out for a DNA analysis with the following question, “Which ones of these samples come from the good humans and which ones come from the no good humans?” If you haven’t guessed the answer by now, it is that all anyone will be able to tell you is that all 200 samples come from humans – not good humans or bad humans – just humans.

Third, someone once asked me what was the basis of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy expecting I would say, “Beliefs cause feelings and behavior.” I surprised them by answering, “Change or suffer – the choice is up to you.” You don’t HAVE TO change, but chances are you’ll just keep on suffering if you don’t. That’s why firmness is so important. If we are not firm with ourselves, we often will keep on suffering because IN THE SHORT RUN it is often easier to keep doing what one has been doing up to now and harder IN THE SHORT RUN to change. However, as I am fond of noting, the problem with a philosophy of eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die is tomorrow comes and we aren’t dead! We are stuck with a mess to clean up. Firmness simply means insisting we

keep our “eyes on the prize” – less suffering and more joy tomorrow because of the work we do today.

Fourth, and finally, who put you in charge of blaming and condemning anyway? As a friend of mine with sixteen plus years of Roman Catholic education likes to say when speaking of Christian theology, “I thought God judged people in the afterlife. Did you get a call from God saying He was busy and needed you to do some judging and, by the way, start with yourself?” I don’t think so. My criteria are a bit stiffer. I want to see a note. Not since Moses do I know anybody getting notes from God – check your pockets! And if, like me, you’re not a Believer, how much more silly and grandiose to think you can appoint yourself “Ruler of the Universe, Judge of Humanity!” Judge behavior – I acted foolishly and that was bad. Judge traits – I typically act foolishly and that is bad. But give up rating your personhood – your humanity. People don’t become louses because of their lousy behavior. You can skip rating anyone else’s personhood either. It’s not your job and no human being knows how to do it anyway.

In short, avoid The Box Game by substituting compassionate understanding and firmness for blame and condemnation whenever you find yourself, on anyone else, both responsible for a problem and for its solution.

The “Breakfast Club” – Laurel/Bowie News

by Michele Blair, Facilitator

In December 2009, the first SMART Recovery® meeting started in Laurel, Maryland. As the meeting grew, it was unofficially dubbed the “Breakfast Club” – based on the movie, not the food! As

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 via email to sallwood@smartrecovery.org.

Based on the increasing quantity of outstanding articles submitted, we are requesting articles be limited to approximately 1000 words.

our 10:00 a.m. breakfast club meeting gained a small, but steady core group, we realized that even though we came from very different backgrounds, we did have two fundamental things in common – addiction and the desire to break the cycle. Several months into the meetings, we started talking about – OK, I’m sober, now what? Getting sober/clean is one thing – **living and enjoying** being clean/sober is a completely new experience for many of us. Where do we start, how do we talk to people, what is it like to socialize sober/clean? In answer to some of these questions, the “Breakfast Club” had its first SMART Recovery® breakfast. We were able to rent one of the newly renovated City facilities at a discount, group members offered to bring food, invitations were sent, (including family and friends) and the first SMART Recovery® breakfast was held in October 2010. Since then we have had one Winter Solstice dinner and a second breakfast, we have had people from the Bowie meeting and are hoping to include more people from the Columbia and other local meetings as well as family and friends. Donny and I are happy with the success of the get-togethers and with the positive feedback we have gotten. “B” from our Saturday and Tuesday meeting said: “I like having the social events from time to time. I think it allows us to get together with the people we’ve been working with on our recovery that is a little more casual without having to deal with the heaviness that comes with recovery. I also think it gives us a chance to include our family members in our recovery. We normally go off and do our thing (continuing care, SMART Recovery®, therapy) on our own. So it’s nice to let them be a part of it ... without it having to be heavy (like dealing with issues

with our significant other or family). I guess, I basically like that we are doing something that has to do with our recovery, but isn't so serious and heavy.”

“D” from our Saturday group associated the whole SMART Recovery® program with the breakfasts and had this to say: “I think the two breakfasts that I attended with the Laurel group were excellent examples of how SMART Recovery® emphasizes community in its program. The meetings themselves begin the process of cooperative rehabilitation by allowing cross-talk and encouraging members to help one another adjust to living sober. The social gatherings bring these practices into a real-life setting where we can participate in relaxed mingling, chit chat, swapping stories, and other elements of adult socialization that we may have never learned, or always relied upon a chemical to get us through. Plus, the gatherings allow us to get to know each other as fully-rounded human beings, with likes and interests that would not necessarily come up at a regular meeting. This more intimate knowledge of one another can only be beneficial. The better we know our fellow members, the more likely our meetings will be productive and helpful for all.”

Not only are the social gatherings helpful for current group members, it’s also a great way to visit with our “graduates.”

SMILE !!!

by Bill Abbott, Facilitator, Massachusetts

You might well ask why is an article like this appearing here. A smile ??? Well think about it and then ... smile. Go on, there ... how does that make you feel? Maybe a little better??

OK!! So now close your eyes. Now open them. 😊

There! Now doesn’t that image make you feel at least a little bit good? It does for most people, and that’s why it’s so popular. And so is this 😊, or often just this :) So read on.

Smile is an important subject not only to the general population, but also to those recovering from an addictive behavior. Recovery is a lot about mindset, a lot about positive thinking, and a lot about self efficacy – that is in coming to believe that you can recover. Remember ... you have the power to recover from this troublesome affliction. And remember you have the ability to choose to do this thing called recovery. And you are certainly more likely to choose this and succeed at it if you feel good. I’m not talking about being happy which is just fine, but merely a feeling of wellbeing, upbeat, optimistic, half-full glass. Recovery is a sometimes tough journey and feeling good helps get over the rough spots. Got it?? Good!!

So what about this thing we call the smile? A smile is part of our everyday living. It’s universal. All humans do it and some animals do too. My dog smiles at me a lot. Like when I give him a cookie. A smile is governed by both voluntary and involuntary muscle action. When the zygomatic muscle contracts it brings the corners of the mouth upward to form the familiar visage of a smile. This is voluntary. The other part of the smile is in the eye. When the orbicularis oculi muscle contracts, it causes a narrowing of the eye with crinkles at the outer edges. Think crow’s feet. This second part of a smile is not voluntary. You can tell just by looking at it; it can be a grimace of pain of course, but that looks nothing like a smile of pleasure.

For centuries scientists and philosophers have talked about the smile. Back in the nineteenth century, French neurologist Guiliame Duchenne studied the smile. He worked out the mechanics of it by giving electric shocks to volunteers in varying parts of their face and observing the responses. Here is a picture of the good doctor at work. (No wonder volunteers are hard to find these days.)



Duchenne first described the genuine smile—that is the one in both the mouth and eyes. Henceforth it has been called the Duchenne smile. Another type of smile is called the PanAm smile as in the now defunct airline. It's the smile that Pan Am stewardesses always wore. A bit phony but yet ... you are a little nervous about flying. Wouldn't you rather be greeted by a lovely 'smiling' Pan Am flight attendant instead of Broom Hilda?? Here's are the two smiles:



Duchenne (on left) versus PanAm (on right)

But the smile is a wonderful thing. We do it naturally. It is a warm form of greeting. It's an expression of happiness or humor or satisfaction or pleasure. The literature is full of references to smiles. A famous one from both Goethe and Marlowe, refers to "the smile that launched 1000 ships" (actually it was the face but many people say smile). This of course was the visage of Helen of Troy who was abducted by Paris in the Iliad.

The 1000 ships that sailed to Troy to conquer it.

Perhaps the most famous smile of all is that of La Giaconda or otherwise known as the Mona Lisa.



And then music ... just think of the many songs that refer to the smile like "Let a smile be your umbrella" or "The shadow of your smile". Or the vintage delight movie found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ps6ck1ejoAw>

So what does this all have to do with recovery or with the psychology of coping with urges, motivation and lifestyle balance? Plenty! Think of the mind. We're not quite sure what the mind actually is but it does make us what and who we are as Homo sapiens with feelings, thoughts, suffering, enjoying, and potentially developing addictive behaviors. We look at the mind indirectly in two ways; our language and behavior. A therapist learns what's going on in our minds by what we say and how we say it. In SMART Recovery® we work on this through REBT. In this we identify our thoughts and beliefs about them and then dispute them to hopefully reach a different result.

Thus keep in mind that by interpreting what and how we say things we can become aware of what's going on ... but this also works in the other direction that is, what we say and how we say it will influence what we think and feel. And then maybe behave. Disputing the beliefs and avoiding absolute words like should and must.

Our mindset is also important. A positive mindset enhances the chances of success in making a change. With a negative mindset, the opposite is true. And these have both short- and long-term impact. Think which is more helpful: "I can't do this" or "I can do this"? This is mindset. And how can we help the mindset? Yup ... the smile.

We are learning to change our language to influence our thinking and to improve our mindset.

Therefore, it only makes sense that as we retrain the way we use language to improve our thinking, if we also retrain the way we look, this will be a step forward too. If you wear a sour look on your face this reflects sourness in your mindset. But if you change that sourness to a pleasant one, negativity dissipates and mindset improves. This may seem a bit forced at the beginning but if you practice smiling (while not looking like an idiot) soon feelings will improve. Instead of the sour look and the accompanying thought of I can't do this, change to a smile and voila – a can't becomes a can. It will help you get wherever you want to go.

There is some science in this. The Duchenne smile has been shown to lead to a more positive life including happiness, satisfaction, and longevity.

So the smile is a positive step – as a motivator to change; as a method of coping with urges; as a facilitator of resolving problematic thoughts and feelings; and as a way to achieve a better lifestyle balance.

These days I smile more. And ... I feel better. And ... I'm sober. So try it. Be like Helen of Troy. Be the Mona Lisa! Put on a happy face!! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTYf-7shaaE>.



SMART Progress

Court Outreach Initiatives

by Dolores Cloward, SMART Recovery® Volunteer

We are at the beginning stages of compiling information to develop a list of US county courts that accept and support choice in providing self-help options to offenders when support group attendance is mandated as part of sentencing requirements or probation/parole. There is much good news to report!

We began by gathering reports (anonymously) from attendees who use SMART Recovery® meeting verifications in compliance with court-mandated peer support attendance. Over a short time-frame (approximately 2 months), 55 individuals, via their facilitators, reported that they use SMART Recovery® verifications for compliance with court and/or probation requirements. With that information, additional research, and contact with court officers, we have been able to verify that 85 counties in the US, representing 27 states, currently accept, or are open to consider, a variety of secular alternatives in addition to 12-step.

We are in the process of verifying, through official documents (e.g., diversion program participant agreements, program descriptions, court and county websites) as well as personal contact with judges, court officers, program administrators and parole/probation officials, that this is indeed “official”

policy. There appears to be much variation in the way individual court officers, counties and county structures operate. It is our goal to attain de facto acceptance of a variety of support group options in all court systems and to have information readily provided to participants so that they may exercise true CHOICE in seeking help.

In some states, court decisions have clearly mandated that secular self-help programs be provided. This has encouraged vast numbers of courts to respond proactively to this growing trend.

Courts are seeking ways to help communities struggling with drug/alcohol offenses to reduce repeat offenses and jail time for non-violent offenders. SMART Recovery® wishes to utilize the information we have been gathering to forge bonds with all courts. We seek to include those that are already friendly to support group choice. We also wish to reach out to those courts that are open to a variety of options, but may be unaware of what is available, both locally and online. Last, we intend to gently encourage those courts that currently rely only on 12-step support groups to learn more about our program and to consider the advantages of providing choice – which we believe will help promote success in recovery, and thus lessen recidivism.

We are pleased to report that individual counties in the states of AZ, CA, FL, MA, MO, NY, NJ and TX can be characterized as “heartily” embracing mutual support options such as SMART Recovery® in their court systems. In addition, counties in AK, CT, FL, KY, MD, MO and OK state clearly that they are open to accepting mutual support based on client preference, and simply

report less familiarity with and demand for such alternatives.

We want to thank all of these courts for their commitment to offer clients meaningful alternatives in support group meeting attendance. Research shows that the most effective outcomes occur when individuals are free to select the recovery program(s) that best meets their needs and beliefs. Thus, helping offenders find resources that best fit their individual needs is a helpful way forward!

As a separate but related endeavor, we intend to increase efforts to help our new face-to-face meeting facilitators find points of contact and

generate publicity in their communities so they may better establish new SMART Recovery® meetings as credible alternatives. We are developing clear, informative and attractive literature to highlight our offerings. We are also partnering with our colleagues at SOS, Women for Sobriety and LifeRing to jointly provide information and materials on the choices available in peer support groups.

Much of this work has stemmed from Florida resident, Harriet Castle, who was troubled to learn that there was little available in her local area other than 12-step meetings. She plunged into researching and learning about available alternatives, contacted our Executive Director, and proceeded to actively and energetically share her findings with her own Volusia County, FL courts. As a result, Volusia County now actively supports and promotes choice in support group participation and has included SMART Recovery® and other options in its literature and program requirements! Harriet has gone on to do an enormous amount of outreach and follow up with a

Courts are seeking ways to help communities struggling with drug/alcohol offenses to reduce repeat offenses and jail time for non-violent offenders.

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number of court systems all over the country. Thank you Harriet – you are showing us a spirit of “getting involved” that is clearly effective and hugely inspiring.

We plan to work vigorously to provide information and resources to counties and states to make available the science-based support SMART Recovery® represents, as well as to promote the value and importance of choice in recovery programs. It is our desire to partner with courts across the US to provide information, resources and mutual support group choices in all 50 states. We would like to assemble a team of volunteers who enjoy research and dialogue with public officials to continue to spread a message that is supported by legal decision and scientific findings. Please contact Shari Allwood via sallwood@smartrecovery.org if you are interested in contributing your time and talent to this effort!

SMART Recovery® Online (SROL) Update

Jonathan von Breton, Director, SMART Recovery® Online

April was volunteer month at SROL. (Charlie, our webmaster and one of our online technical volunteers, came up with the idea of April as Volunteer Month.) All the current volunteers actively encouraged members to consider volunteering in any number of different capacities. We were looking for people to volunteer in the Chat Room, on the Message Board and as Online Facilitators. The current volunteers in all three of those areas talked about how valuable the experience was to them. Volunteering helped them grow in their recovery, learn new skills and improve the skills they already had.

This announcement was displayed as part of the meeting opening at all on-line meetings in April: “April is Volunteer Month at SMART Recovery®! SMART Recovery® offers a wealth of online resources, including extensive message boards, daily online meetings, and a 24/7 chat room. These services could not be provided without a cadre of dedicated volunteers! We thank those who are currently volunteering, and encourage you to consider actively volunteering as a meeting helper, meeting facilitator, message board volunteer, or a chat-room volunteer. Visit <http://smartrecoveryforum.org/vol/index.htm> to get information on volunteering!”

The drive was successful beyond our wildest dreams, and we do have some very wild dreams! Eight people volunteered for various positions. That included four new Online Facilitators.

We also had three special events. These were coordinated by Dee, The Special Events Coordinator. These were talks given by Ed Garcia and Robert Meyers. You can read more about these and the availability of each as a podcast in Dee’s column on Special Events.

SMART Recovery® Special Events

by Delores Cloward, Volunteer Special Events Coordinator

We are pleased to report huge success in recent efforts to host SMART Recovery® special events in order to celebrate our loyal friends and allow our community to hear their wise, deeply knowledgeable thoughts on some of the many facets of living sanely. This began in December 2010 with a job-hunting series hosted by Bill Knaus, Ed Garcia, and Ron Parker. That event ran for six consecutive weeks and was very, very helpful to many. In addition, Dr. Knaus enlisted his wife’s assistance in preparing wonderfully

complete transcripts of each session that were posted for future reference on the message boards.

In April we hosted Ed Garcia, for a kick-off of a four-part Anatomy of Emotions series. This was a wonderful introduction to thoughts about how emotions fit into the world of REBT. Specifically that our thoughts create our emotions and that we are capable of managing them. Statements that Ed Garcia puts the “E” back into REBT are apt! On May 26th, Mr. Garcia returned for the second in the Emotions series, “Understanding Anger and Fear.”

By press time, Dr. Michael Edelstein, author of *Three Minute Therapy*, will have appeared to share his perspective on REBT, and in July, Dr. Bill Knaus, foremost authority on procrastination, will return to host a month-long mini-workshop on procrastination with many accompanying resources, frequent tips, Q&A sessions to keep people on track, and possibly a contest to create an updated figure that represents that sneaky “voice of procrastination” that whispers to so many of us. That workshop will kick off on July 1st with a three-hour presentation, there will be weekly follow-up sessions and wrap up at the end of the month with review and guidance in continuing one’s efforts.

Accompanying these special events, we have been incorporating social media to help publicize and advertise. Our blog has discussed each event in advance; we have used both Facebook and Twitter as reminders and to generate excitement. SMARTCAL listserv announcements help us get the word out to our volunteers so they can, in turn, share the special event information with their meeting participants. Finally, we have launched a new series of podcasts,

recordings of the events themselves, available for later listening. Dr. Knaus's upcoming presentation will produce some (we hope) exciting material that will serve as an introduction to those who were unable to attend and a refresher and aid to those who would like to reinforce their learning later on.

Our podcasts have been phenomenally successful! During the time they've been up (about 5 weeks at this writing), we have had over 900 downloads of the recordings of Ed Garcia and Dr. Robert Meyers. They are also available in the iTunes store (free). We have been aided in this effort by a small team led by one of our fabulous volunteers, media consultant, Paul Toth. He stated early on that we would be surprised by the reception and spread via this media, and he sure was right – we are astonished and delighted! Podcasts can be found at this link: <http://smartrecovery.libsyn.com/>.

The response to these events has been highly favorable. Regarding Mr. Garcia's talk about anger, one participant wrote: "I enjoyed this presentation more than anything I've heard in years. It was great and has given me so many questions to begin thinking and reading about."

Check out our new Podcasts!



Featuring recordings by authorities in the fields of addiction counseling and psychology, covering topics of interest to those in recovery and the general public!

www.smartrecovery.libsyn.com

Book Review



AA: Not the Only Way— Your One Stop Resource Guide to 12-Step Alternatives

Second Edition, by Melanie Solomon

Book review by Richard Ceranek

This book is the best, perhaps the only, work that pulls together in one small volume most, perhaps all, of the treatment programs and self-help groups available to someone who is either addicted to or has a serious problem with alcohol or other drugs. Those of us connected within the SMART Recovery® family are obviously aware of options other than the 12-step programs of A.A. and N.A.

As those of us in SMART Recovery® already know, and as Miss Solomon reminds us, knowledge is power. Her book provides great direction to assist one in obtaining more knowledge, including knowledge tailored to the individual's needs. She gives hope for those who are dually diagnosed with such things as alcoholism, bipolar disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder, depression, anxiety and other diagnoses. Those who suffer from dual diagnoses can take heart in Miss Solomon's successful resolution of a multiple diagnosis.

Miss Solomon's personal story goes into some detail concerning her problems with A.A. and the 12-step program. Many of us who now attend SMART Recovery® meetings went through a similar dilemma. Regardless, her story will bring to mind thoughts such as: "That sounds like me"; "I had that problem"; "That sounds like some of the poor or ineffective advice I was given". I could go on and on but suggest that you, the potential reader, pick the book up, read it, and find your own lodestar of connection.

The personal "associative moments" continue in the pages in which she describes different programs and self-help groups. Total Abstinence, 12-step groups, Rational Recovery, SMART Recovery® and other programs are examined briefly.

***Miss Solomon's book
is a fantastic resource
guide with something
for everyone.***

The author provides a concise synopsis of the different programs. As Miss Solomon states, all of the programs contain useful ideas and each method produces some successes and some failures.

There is an interesting review of the concept of moderation, or managing one's alcohol intake. There is even some information about Harm Reduction Therapy (HRT) which tries to support and convince the user that he or she can reduce the harm to himself/herself and those around them by learning more about drugs and alcohol and by developing strategies to reduce their usage.

There is even a section on alternative treatments such as hypno-therapy,

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fitness, Chinese herbs and acupuncture. Some of these alternative treatments are indeed “alternative”. Nevertheless, most of us would agree that fitness supports recovery and the others are at least thought provoking.

In short, Miss Solomon’s work contains something that will both intrigue and resonate with all who read it. However, the most important thing about Miss Solomon’s work is the resource guide. No one else, at least to my knowledge, has ever put together such a comprehensive treasure trove of program summaries and a resource directory allowing one to find reading materials, treatment professionals, programs and website to gain further knowledge on treatment alternatives. The 71 pages of professionals and treatment programs are organized by state. There are brief, descriptive summaries of the treatment professional’s area or areas of practice and descriptions of the treatment centers’ individual programs, treatment methods, and the theory behind their programs. For each of the professionals and programs, she provides a location, telephone number, e-mail address, and often a website. Similar contact information also appears in the non-directory, text portion of the book. There is also a recommended reading guide and notes to assist those who wish to read more about different aspects of addiction and recovery.

Although there probably is a program out there that isn’t mentioned in this book, there are none of which I have heard. And if there are, I am sure that Miss Solomon would include it in her third edition.

In conclusion, Miss Solomon’s book is a fantastic resource guide with something for everyone. She provides information

on many programs. She reminds us that some programs work for some people and other programs work for other people. Although I am certainly most comfortable with the cognitive therapy and cost benefit analysis of SMART Recovery®, she provides many other windows of opportunity for those who wish to obtain additional information. And in point of fact, those are tools of recovery and any tool that is useful to one’s own recovery by definition is a good useful tool for that individual.



SMART Recovery® Australia Update

Overview of Activities March-June 2011:

We are continuing to train new facilitators to run SMART Recovery® groups. On the first Friday of every month we offer in-house training. In April we also travelled to Wollongong, NSW where we conducted training to 16 people. Wollongong has been very proactive in supporting SMART Recovery® in their community.

Jim and Richard presented at the Drugs and Young People Conference in Melbourne on the 4th of May. This was the first time that SMART Recovery® took part in this conference. Jim and Richard presented on SMART Recovery®, our on-going relationship with Juvenile Justice and how we are

going to pilot Teen/Youth SMART Recovery® in one the Juvenile Justice Centres. SMART Recovery® was well received with many Teen/Youth organisations interested in training with the aim to start running the program. This conference assisted us to build better networks in Victoria. There were 400 delegates from Australia and around the world.

Teen/Youth will expand in Juvenile Justice Centre at Reiby. Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) is located at Airds near Campbelltown, with a capacity of 60 young people. The centre was opened in August 1973 and primarily accommodates males under the age of 16 years, who are on control orders or on remand. The centre offers a range of health, educational and spiritual services to the young people, including individual case management, specialised counselling, and training in job and living skills. The centre also specialises in managing young male offenders with extreme behavioural problems with a unit specifically designated to address the special needs of this group. The Waratah Unit, also at Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre, was opened in late 2010, and is a pre-release unit aimed at preparing young people for return into the community. The unit caters for 10 young people from across NSW.

SMART Recovery® Australia now offers a 2nd day training for our “current” SMART Recovery® facilitators to offer on-going support, training and to ensure program integrity. This five hour training course outlines what is working in their groups, what is not working in their groups, how to deal with difficult people and patterns of group dynamics. This training has been designed to assist our SMART Recovery® Facilitators with motivation, information and to thank them for their on-going commitment

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and dedication to SMART Recovery®. Since March we have hosted three of these training, two in Sydney and one in Melbourne.

Our pilot for the Be SMART Program ended on the 17th of May. This eight week program was held at our Head Office on Pitt Street. The feedback we received from the participants has been very positive. Now that the pilot has been completed we will make any amendments to the program (that are necessary) and begin training our current SMART Recovery® facilitators on Be SMART in the middle of July.

SMART Recovery® AU has become a member of Fido: an internet-based skills matching service of The Centre of Volunteering, assisting non-profit organisations. Our aim is to train volunteers on grant writing, marketing and facilitator training.



Dr. Joe Gerstein (center) with Jim and Josette during Joe's April visit to the AU Office.

Jim and Josette will be travelling to Perth on the 30th of May to attend and present at the Australasian Therapeutic

Communities Association (ATCA). The theme of this year's conference is called No Closed Doors. Our presentation will discuss how we have partnered with various organisations throughout Australia and how these partnerships have opened doors for joint collaborations over the past four years.

Jim and Josette have been invited to Lightening Ridge, NSW in the first week of July to conduct facilitator training.



From Beyond the Walls

Positively Viewing Life is SMART

by Barry A. Grant

Our options for how we respond to the men and women in our lives are vast. Being critical is one option open to us. Indifference and gentleness are others. The way we treat others reveals our own state of being. When we feel at peace, we generally respond peacefully to others. Conversely, when we feel worthless and full of self-doubt, we're likely to be sarcastic towards others. However, we can pull ourselves out of the self-imposed dungeon of despair. The method is this:

In spite of personal feelings, be warm, kind and gentle in every personal exchange with another, and your own dark mood is sure to be lifted.

Again we are confronted with the reality that we make our own world. Our treatment of others treats ourselves simultaneously. Our friends and co-workers mirror the self we often think we're hiding away. A conscious decision will guarantee the happiness we long for when the decision is to be gentle, loving and caring toward all of the people in our lives.

Opportunities abound each day of our lives for respectful, thoughtful actions toward others. It's within our power to apply serious effort to any task securing our attention. Being concerned with our physical health and emotional wellbeing is also a choice. And we discover the level of happiness we attain in this life is proportionate to the considerate attention we give to others, to our personal needs, and to the activities occupying us. We sit at the controls today, and our perspective on the situations we experience will make them pleasant, productive or problematic.

Positively Speaking: My conduct toward others, my unspoken thoughts and unexpressed attitudes will have their effect.

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