



President's Letter

Tolerance

This column is primarily an invitation to read, "A message of tolerance and celebration: The portrayal of multiple pathways of recovery in the writings of Alcoholics Anonymous co-founder Bill Wilson," by William ("Bill") White and Ernie Kurtz. The paper will shortly be posted at www.williamwhitepapers.com. Writings dating back to the 1970s are posted there. Bill White is on the SMART Recovery® International Advisory Council. Both authors are highly respected in the addiction field.

The 17-page paper (plus references) begins: "One of the central messages of the New Recovery Advocacy Movement is the declaration that there are many pathways and styles of long-term recovery from severe alcohol and other

drug problems." Shortly thereafter, the authors ask: "Given the high representation of people with Twelve Step backgrounds within this movement, how can these recovery advocates' declaration of the legitimacy of multiple pathways of recovery be reconciled with the charges by Twelve Step critics that AA and other Twelve Step groups practice coercive and cult-like indoctrination and a 'one size fits all,' anti-professional, anti-scientific approach to addiction recovery?"

They continue: "As long-time researchers of AA, it is our experience that the person most willing to speak first on behalf of AA is, by definition, the least qualified to do so." To avoid this problem, they suggest that "the clearest definition of Twelve Step philosophy can be found in AA's basic texts and the other writings of AA co-founder Bill Wilson, particularly his articles in the AA Grapevine."

Most of the remaining paper is devoted to quotations that leave little doubt, to me at least, that Bill Wilson was fully tolerant of other approaches to recovery, and wise in a number of

other ways, as well. A few examples (from pages 4-5):

- "AA has no monopoly on reviving alcoholics." (Wilson, 1944/1988, p. 98)
- "The average member of Alcoholics Anonymous does not suppose we have a cure- all." (Wilson, 1945b, p. 239)

(Continued on page 2)

Inside:

President's Letter

Tolerance.....1
4-Point Program®1

SMART Progress

Recollections from the 2010 SMART Recovery® Annual Gathering from Two Perspectives2
Articles are Welcome!4
Attention Volunteers – Ongoing Tool Training and Support!5
SMART Recovery® Online Update6
Family & Friends Online Meeting Now Available!6
2010 Survey.....6
SMART Recovery® Handbook is now available in Danish!7

International Development

SMART Recovery Australia® Update.....7
SMART Recovery UK® (SRUK) Update7
SMART Recovery Alberta® Update8
SMART Recovery® in Edmonton, Alberta9

SMART Ideas

How To Pass the Hat and Get Some Money in It. A Treatment Plan9
Make Contact, Don't Push10
Tips to Stay Clean and Sober11

People Power

Let Me Shine!14
I have achieved...3 years sober!15

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

- “In all probability, we shall never be able to touch more than a fair fraction of the alcohol problem in all its ramifications. Upon therapy for the alcoholic himself, we surely have no monopoly.” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1955, p. ix)
- “In no circumstances should members feel that Alcoholics Anonymous is the know-all and do-all of alcoholism.” (Wilson, 1965/1988, p. 332)
- “Then, too, it would be a product of false pride to believe that Alcoholics Anonymous is a cure-all, even for alcoholism.” (Wilson, 1963/1988, p. 346)
- “It is an historical fact that practically all groupings of men and women tend to become more dogmatic; their beliefs and practices harden and sometimes freeze. This is a natural and almost inevitable process.... But dogma also has its liabilities. Simply because we have convictions that work well for us, it becomes very easy to assume that we have all the truth.... This isn't good dogma; it's very bad dogma. It could be especially destructive for us of AA to indulge in this sort of thing.” (Wilson, 1965/1988, p. 333)

The paper concludes: “This short essay has used excerpts from the writings of Bill Wilson to illustrate AA's understanding of its own limitations, recognition of diverse recovery experience within AA, tolerance toward alternative pathways and styles of recovery, openness to collaborate with service professionals and scientists in the alcoholism field, and Wilson's personal hope that AA would remain an open, evolving society forever focused on service to and recovery for the still suffering alcoholic.”

I hope that when the history of SMART Recovery® is written, there will not be a need to collect quotations from its early practitioners, to show that we truly are tolerant and appreciative of the multiple paths to recovery.

Tom Howath



Recollections from the 2010 SMART Recovery® Annual Gathering from Two Perspectives

The first perspective provided by Jamie Ritter, Facilitator, Dania Beach, FL...

Arising at 4:30 a.m., groggy and half asleep, I began my lengthy journey from South Florida to San Diego. After a six-hour flight, I ventured from the plane eager and bursting with anticipation. Overcast and slightly chilly, the weather was abnormal compared to a typical California day. Nonetheless, the gray clouds could not obscure the magnificence of the city.

As I arrived at the hotel, a tropical island paradise, a vivacious redheaded woman who was to be my roommate greeted me cordially. Following the brief introduction, I quickly put my luggage in the room and then joined other participants in the lobby for a two-hour

harbor tour. Though I knew no one at the convention and was slightly nervous, everyone was immensely warm and welcoming and it was not long before I began building friendships. The harbor tour was an excellent opportunity to mingle with the other participants and to relax and see some of the fantastic sights of San Diego.

Arriving back at the hotel, the group dispersed to get ready for the lovely Greek dinner being held at water's edge. When the time arrived to congregate that evening, I was famished. The meal was delicious and I fervently filled up my plate. As the night progressed, I enjoyed conversing with several people and hearing their stories and personal accounts of SMART Recovery®. By 8 p.m., I was exhausted. It had been an arduous day of traveling and excitement. Heading back to my hotel, I reflected on how grateful I felt to be able to participate in this experience.

The following morning, I woke up early for breakfast and the start of the conference for which I'd waited with enthusiasm. The agenda was packed with intriguing presentations as well as interactive strategic planning. I learned an abundance of valuable information and had the chance to share my experiences and offer my unique skills to the group.

Unfortunately, I missed the Saturday evening activities, as I decided to visit family members living in San Diego for dinner. I heard the SMART jeopardy game was a blast! Later that evening, when I got back to my room, my roommate and I bonded as we shared our stories. As I drifted off to sleep, I was overcome with joy and appreciation. Moments like this weekend make life worthwhile.

Published by the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Self-Help Network, Inc. D.B.A. SMART Recovery®

7304 Mentor Avenue, Suite F, Mentor, OH 44060 • Phone: 440/951-5357 • Fax: 440/951-5358 • E-mail: info@smartrecovery.org • www.smartrecovery.org

Sunday morning was filled with heartfelt goodbyes and picture-taking, as we all hoped to capture the beautiful memories. The final presentations were incredibly informative. My favorite aspect of the convention though was definitely the finale where we broke into groups and role-played a meeting.

Overall, if I had to rate this convention I would have to give it five stars. My experience was powerful and transformative. I came home with renewed enthusiasm for the program and immediately began incorporating the new information I learned. I am very thankful to all those who worked to put this opportunity together and can hardly wait to participate next year!

And the Second Perspective by Jeff Yocom, Facilitator, Louisville, KY . . .

Before attending the 2010 SMART Recovery® Annual Gathering, which met October 15 to 17 in San Diego, I was finding the task lonely of nurturing of SMART Recovery® in my hometown of Louisville, KY. Though the Wednesday-night meeting I had started about months 20 earlier had seen some periods of decent attendance, it had not gotten the traction provided by a consistent group of participants. I remained the only regular facilitator, and I was considering ending the meeting because of the time demands it placed on

an already-strained personal schedule. I had family responsibilities, a full-time job, graduate school, and a growing list of exercise and diet requirements prescribed by my doctor to stave off the diabetes and heart disease that run in my family.

Fortunately, the Annual Gathering provided just the boost my SMART Recovery® mojo needed. Though the skies in San Diego were uncharacteristically cloudy, the atmosphere was sunny and clear inside the conference room of the Humphrey's Half Moon Inn, where the Annual Gathering convened. It is difficult to describe the energy generated when 60 people with a shared passion come together in the same room. And it is impossible to describe how energizing it was for me to hear first-hand from other facilitators and volunteers how they had recruited attendees, reached out to treatment centers, and built volunteer bases for their local SMART Recovery® efforts.

The optional harbor cruise that unofficially kicked off the Gathering provided a great opportunity to see countless military and civilian vessels, while getting a crash course on San Diego's maritime history. Hot chocolate helped alleviate the chill in the air as SMART Recovery® volunteers from all corners of the United States and as far away as Stockholm, Sweden, started getting to know one another. Later that evening, the entire group of attendees got together for a beachside dinner of spanakopita, grilled

chicken, and baklava.

On Saturday morning, the program kicked into full gear as SMART Recovery® Executive Director Shari Allwood delivered a Strategic Planning Update. She briefed everyone on plans for fundraising, the recent materials review, efforts to increase the number of meetings, and website improvements. Next, Brett Saarela discussed how the stages of change relate to SMART Recovery®. Then, Dr. Joe Gerstein and Lee Harper explained a tool for helping someone in the early stages of recovery overcome ambivalence by defining that person's own hierarchy of values and exploring where alcohol or drugs fit into it.

The program continued with doctoral candidate Doug Anderson offering a summary of themes that arose from his interviews with 10 SMART Recovery® participants about their experiences with the program. SMART Recovery® Volunteer Curtis Boudreau, from Alberta, energized the room with his experiences presenting SMART Recovery® to treatment facilities and an accelerated version of his standard presentation. The morning concluded with an update on SMART Recovery® Online by Lorie Hammerstrom and a whole team of online facilitators and volunteers.

The afternoon was just as action packed. Milton Brown, PhD, and Brooke

advertisement



ST. GREGORY
RETREAT CENTER

Help yourself or a loved one.

The Life Process Program® is an 8-week residential Life skills/cognitive behavior training program that offers an alternative to 12-step drug rehab and alcoholism treatment programs.

"The Life Process Program is the most advanced addiction-prevention program available in the U.S. today"

— Stanton Peele, PhD, JD



Call toll free
888-778-5833

Published by the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Self-Help Network, Inc. D.B.A. SMART Recovery®

7304 Mentor Avenue, Suite F, Mentor, OH 44060 • Phone: 440/951-5357 • Fax: 440/951-5358 • E-mail: info@smartrecovery.org • www.smartrecovery.org

Schuster, MA, got things started with a presentation on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). They focused on specific elements of DBT that are ideal for self-help groups and especially SMART Recovery®.

The room really started jumping when SMART Recovery® President Tom Horvath led a discussion about the most pressing challenges facing SMART Recovery®, along with possible solutions. The exercise employed full-room discussions and breakout groups to identify the challenges deemed most critical by SMART Recovery® volunteers in the field and at the home office. There were no sacred cows, and seemingly every possibility was on the table as participants discussed ways to grow SMART Recovery®, improve the tools it provides, and position SMART Recovery® within the local, national, and international recovery communities.

After that intense discussion, everyone was ready to kick back and enjoy a relaxing pizza dinner. But things got exciting again when special guest Alex Trebek (who looked an awful lot like a mustachioed Lorie Hammerstrom) dropped by for a game of SMART Recovery® Jeopardy! Participants broke into teams for an evening of trivia related to SMART Recovery® history, SMART Recovery® tools, and embarrassing photos of SMART board members, staff, and volunteers.

Sunday was a short day but packed with useful and encouraging information for SMART Recovery® volunteers. First, Shari Allwood and several facilitators and volunteers discussed various ways for using social networking and other media to increase meeting attendance, enhance awareness, and widen outreach. After that, Julie Meyers and several other volunteers from the San Diego area

discussed how they have built and maintained an impressive SMART Recovery® community in the city that hosted this year's Annual Gathering.

The last activity was a breakout role-playing exercise that gave several facilitators new to the role an opportunity to practice managing a SMART Recovery® meeting. The camaraderie and mutual support was inspiring as experienced facilitators provided encouragement and advice for the new facilitators, some of whom had not yet facilitated their first meeting.

By the time the Annual Gathering wrapped up at noon on Sunday, I felt energized by the passion and experiences that my fellow SMART Recovery® volunteers had shared with me. I couldn't wait to get back home so I could try out some of the great ideas I had learned for spreading the word about SMART Recovery® and getting others engaged in the effort. And I can't wait for next year's Annual Gathering!



Alex Trebek (a.k.a. Hammerbeck) host of SMART Jeopardy



View from the meeting room



The pool and grounds at Humphrey's Half Moon Inn



The group ready to board the Harbor Cruise



The Sessions

Articles are Welcome!

If you have a story or information you would like to see published in the *News & Views*, please feel free to submit a copy to Emmett Velten, Editor, via e-mail: ev.verb@gmail.com. Unsolicited material is most welcome!

Published by the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Self-Help Network, Inc. D.B.A. SMART Recovery®

7304 Mentor Avenue, Suite F, Mentor, OH 44060 • Phone: 440/951-5357 • Fax: 440/951-5358 • E-mail: info@smartrecovery.org • www.smartrecovery.org

Attention Volunteers – Ongoing Tool Training and Support!

Did you know that you have access to ongoing training and support meetings that take place each month in the SMART Recovery® Voice meeting room? If you don't have a microphone, you can still benefit from hearing what the presenters have to say and you may type in your questions and comments. Please be sure to join in!

Date	Time	Presenter	Topic
Sat. Jan 1, 2011	24 Hours	Online Volunteers	NEW YEARS FUNDRAISER
Tue. Jan 4, 2011	8:00 PM	Shari	Worst Case Scenario Role-play
Mon. Jan 10, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Hammer	Fresh Start
Mon. Jan 31, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Saarela/Hammer	Authoritative Facilitator & Volunteer Training
Tue. Feb 1, 2011	8:00 PM	Brett Saarela	Stages Of Change
Sat. Feb 5, 2011	6:00 PM	Charlie	OARS
Tue. Feb 8, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Hammer	Fresh Start
Tue. Feb 22, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Saarela/Hammer	Authoritative Facilitator & Volunteer Training
Tue. Mar 1, 2011	8:00 PM	Anneb	Motivational Interviewing Role-play
Sat. Mar 5, 2011	6:00 PM	Richard	Goals and Values
Mon. Mar 14, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Hammer	Fresh Start
Mon. Mar 28, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Saarela/Hammer	Authoritative Facilitator & Volunteer Training
Sat. Apr 2, 2011	6:00 PM	Jonathan	De-Awfulizing/CBA
Tue. Apr 5, 2011	8:00 PM	Emmett Velten	ABCs of REBT Urge Coping
Tue. April 12, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Hammer	Fresh Start
Tue. April 26, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Saarela/Hammer	Authoritative Facilitator & Volunteer Training
Tue. May 3, 2011	8:00 PM	Joe Gerstein	Hierarchy of Values/DISARM
Sat. May 7, 2011	6:00 PM	Richard	Message Board Tips and Tricks
Mon. May 9, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Hammer	Fresh Start
Mon. May 30, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Saarela/Hammer	Authoritative Facilitator & Volunteer Training
Sat. June 4, 2011	6:00 PM	Brett Saarela	Stages of Change
Tue. June 7, 2011	8:00 PM	Henry Steinberger	OARS
Tue. June 14, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Hammer	Fresh Start
Tue. June 28, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Saarela/Hammer	Authoritative Facilitator & Volunteer Training
July 4, 2011	All day	Online Volunteers	INDEPENDENCE FUNDRAISER
Mon. July 11, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Hammer	Fresh Start
Mon. July 25, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Saarela/Hammer	Authoritative Facilitator & Volunteer Training
Tue. Aug 2, 2011	8:00 PM	GJBXVI	Motivational Interviewing
Sat. Aug 6, 2011	6:00 PM	Shari	Worst Case Scenario Role-play
Tue. Aug 9, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Hammer	Fresh Start
Tue. Aug 30, 2011	8:00 PM	Horvath/Saarela/Hammer	Authoritative Facilitator & Volunteer Training

Published by the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Self-Help Network, Inc. D.B.A. SMART Recovery®

7304 Mentor Avenue, Suite F, Mentor, OH 44060 • Phone: 440/951-5357 • Fax: 440/951-5358 • E-mail: info@smartrecovery.org • www.smartrecovery.org

SMART Recovery® Online Update

by Jonathan von Breton, Director, SMART Recovery® Online

SROL just celebrated its 12th Birthday. Just as we did last year, and the year before that, we had a fabulous time. We had nine fabulous guest speakers in voice chat, including some exciting new speakers as well as many old friends.

- Bill White - The History of Addiction Treatment and Recovery in America
- Joe Gerstein - Australian Opals and the Origin of SMART Recovery®
- Reid Hester - Overcoming Addictions in America: A SMART Recovery® Interactive Internet Course
- Anne Fletcher - *Sober for Good*
- Tom Horvath - How the SMART Recovery® Organization is Different from 12 step Organizations
- Bill Knaus - End Procrastination: How to Take Charge of Your Life.
- Barry Grant Board of Directors - The Barry Grant Story (This was a first-time ever event!)
- Emmett Velten and Jonathan von Breton - Ask the Pros
- Hank Robb - What Elements of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Would Work well in a Self-Help Group?

This year we had 75 items up for auction, which was 18 more items than last year. These items included auto-graphed books and treats from various parts of the world. Like last year, the bidding was fast, furious, competitive, and a lot of fun.

Board member Richard Bozian made a \$250.00 matching pledge challenge

again this year. This challenge was met, bringing in \$500.00. Rod Allwood then put up a \$100.00 matching pledge challenge. Both challenges were met for a total of \$700.00.

Like last year, the fundraiser/birthday party was a huge financial success. We raised more than \$3,500.00, which was \$500.00 more than last year's total.

In addition to those already mentioned above, I want to thank everyone else who made this year's Birthday celebration so successful. I really, really hope I haven't left anyone out:

- Angela_C did all the pictures of the items up for bid for the auction, all 75 of them.
- Sheinpx created the beautiful slideshow of the faces of SROL.
- Richard put in all kinds of last-minute minutes that I know of, because he bailed me out on a few things. And that doesn't even count all the forum party decorations.
- Jodi had to go out and get to the SMART Recovery® office to take calls.
- Olive helped with keeping the list of auction items up to date.
- Twoputts worked on getting hosts for the speakers.
- Kalar ran the volunteer hour.
- Momrox, Ulf, Kelly, Egwene, Twoputts, Charlie, Shari, Bigmouth, and GJBXVI hosted hours for speakers.
- Ulf and RMC created the beautiful SMART Recovery® calendar (you can still buy it).
- Numerous SROL members donated fantastic items for the highly successful auction.
- And this year we were joined by more face-to-face facilitators than

ever before. I am so appreciative of that support.

- AndHammer!

Let's face it, these things don't organize themselves. Hammer worked on this since last June, and she did a tremendous job for us, SMART Recovery®, SROL, and the thousands of people out there we reach and the tens of thousands we have yet to reach.

Family & Friends Online Meeting Now Available!

Do you have a loved one struggling with addictive behaviors—drinking, drugging, gambling, etc.? If so, please join us for a weekly online meeting for Family & Friends on Monday evenings, from 9-10:30 PM Eastern Time. The meetings provide time to address specific issues encountered when a friend or family member tries to reach out to help a loved one.

The meetings share SMART Recovery® tools family members, friends, and their loved ones can implement to help with emotional upsets, effective communication methods, and other common problems. Techniques employed within the CRAFT Program (Community Reinforcement And Family Training) will also be shared for the benefit of meeting attendees.

To participate in the meetings, register for SMART Recovery® Online via www.smartrecovery.org. Also, be sure to visit our Concerned Significant Others Message Board Forum for additional support. Our community of volunteers will warmly welcome your participation!

2010 Survey

Heartfelt thanks to those of you who took the time to participate in our 2010 Survey! You provided a great deal of

Published by the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Self-Help Network, Inc. D.B.A. SMART Recovery®

7304 Mentor Avenue, Suite F, Mentor, OH 44060 • Phone: 440/951-5357 • Fax: 440/951-5358 • E-mail: info@smartrecovery.org • www.smartrecovery.org

helpful feedback and information we can use in planning for the future. If you'd like to review a summary of the survey results, visit www.smartrecovery.org, and click on the 2010 Participant Survey Results link.

SMART Recovery® Handbook is now available in Danish!

Thanks to volunteer Bendt Skjold Hansen, we now have the SMART Recovery® Handbook available in Danish! That would be the SMART Recovery® Håndbogen! This adds to our collection of other languages: English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Farsi, German, and Portuguese. Volunteers did each of these translations, and we're grateful to each of them! Very welcome future translations include Russian, Polish, Romanian, Ukrainian, Hindi, Swahili, and Arabic.

Tak, Bendt!



International Development

SMART Recovery Australia® Update

Happy Holidays from Australia! 2010 has been a very busy year for us, and as summer approaches, we are finishing up many events on our calendar.

In September, Josette and Jim trained at DRUG ARM Queensland. DRUG ARM offers a variety of treatment, case-

managed support, and youth programs. They are currently conducting SMART Recovery® meetings within their organization.

In Melbourne, Victoria, SMART Recovery® continues to grow with additional new groups and trainings. Jim trained at Windana, a youth withdrawal service. The program provides youth withdrawal, respite, and intensive support services, accommodating six young people between the ages of 12 and 21. Windana has adopted the SMART principles and runs a weekly meeting on their premises.

In October, Josette provided training in Griffith, NSW. Griffith is 570 km southwest of Sydney, with a population 24,000 people. Their first SMART Recovery® meeting took place on November 4 at their local neighbourhood centre.

Also on November 4, Jim presented a 30 minute talk on the Be SMART: Family and Carers Program at the Creating Synergy Drug and Alcohol Conference in Wollongong, NSW. The Conference featured innovative programs and practical advice and information from Australia and overseas about how to involve parents, partners, children, and other carers in drug and alcohol interventions. With over 200 delegates, the conference was a great opportunity for continued networking and future partnerships.

SMART Recovery Australia® is now hosting its first online meeting. The online meeting commenced on Monday November 8 at 8 pm Australia EDT, lasts 90 minutes, and is accessible at www.smartrecoveryforum.org. People should be reminded that they will need to register for SMART Recovery® Online before they can gain access into the meeting rooms.

At the end of November, Josette attended the APSAD Conference. The annual APSAD Drug and Alcohol

Conference is quite important in that it provides an important avenue for APSAD to promote the use of best practices in the prevention, early intervention, and treatment of alcohol and other drug problems. SMART Recovery® has been represented at this conference for the past six years and allows the coordinators to network with agencies from all over Australia.

Josette and Jim will finish off the year by providing two "in-house" facilitator trainings and one more visit to Melbourne to continue training and support the current SMART Recovery® groups as needed. It is the aim of SMART Recovery Australia® to provide program integrity with all our groups and assist as needed to all our volunteer facilitators.

SMART Recovery UK® (SRUK) Update

SRUK has had a busy, exciting time since the last newsletter.

We are making good progress on our partnership model and are currently talking to over 50 care and treatment organizations that have shown an interest. Six of these are very large treatment providers within the UK. A number of organizations are ready to start and made a firm commitment to the model. The partners will help kick-start SMART Recovery® meetings and encourage clients to train as facilitators. They benefit their clients by offering them recovery options.

The distance-learning course provided to us by the USA in August was brilliant, and we very much appreciated the time and effort everyone put in for us. From that training, we have 25 new facilitators, taking our total to 49.

The SRUK meeting list is growing constantly: we now have 59 open meetings and 24 closed meetings. In the last few months, new meetings have been set

up in Andover, Bromley, Doncaster, Dudley, Exeter, Halifax, Leeds, Nottingham, and Southampton. As Jodi will tell you, the list changes weekly. Thank you, Jodi, for all your help and support. The number of meetings has roughly doubled in six months, so we have momentum.

The SRUK online training program has taken a little longer to develop than originally thought. We expect it to be operational by the start of December, so have started to advertise via our mailing list for people wishing to do the course. SRUK launched our first ever online meeting in October. Thanks to everyone who attended, especially the Americans who kept it going while we overcame some technical issues, all of which have now been sorted out. A very big thank you also has to go to the facilitator John, jcm8000. The meetings are now weekly, 6:30 pm Sunday nights (UK time).

Anyone wishing to join our chat system has to follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://training.smartrecovery.org.uk> and follow registration instructions;
2. Then visit <http://chat.smartrecovery.org.uk> and login using the username and password you established in step 1. (See the website for more details, including our desktop chat, which is an alternative to using a web browser, which is sometimes tricky to configure.)

The other online event we have established is a facilitators' meeting, which takes place a couple of times a month. These meetings have been extremely helpful in getting feedback from facilitators and gaining their new ideas.

Our finances remain precarious, though we now have several organizations that have agreed in principle to modest funding, which should carry us through. We must however express our sincere gratitude for the support of the Roxbury Foundation without which the organization might not have survived.

Should anyone wish to join our mailing list please subscribe at news.smartrecovery.org.uk.

– Carol and Richard

Editor's Note: Please see Bill A.'s article in this newsletter re: Passing the Hat. In the UK, make that a bowler.

SMART Recovery Alberta® Update

Hello to all from Alberta!

We have had continued success in gaining acceptance in the recovery world, as well as the medical and psychological worlds. I last saw my psychologist, and he let me know that people are now considering SMART Recovery®, as well as 12 Step, as means to start a recovery process, which is wonderful news. Many physicians, counselors, and therapists put SMART Recovery® in the forefront of their clients' and patients' minds as a means to recovery. I credit this success to getting out and doing presentations for not only possible participants, but therapists, doctors, and other staff whenever the opportunity arises.

The next presentation is at the monthly staff meeting for the Alpha House team. I am really looking forward to this presentation. It's great to have the staff become more confident about recommending SMART Recovery® to clients. It seems to personalize our program when I show up with a smile and positive energy. I will be posting the presentation online, so stay tuned!

I have also been in contact with Shari regarding putting my 1-hour presentation on video, as well as a 10-15 minute introductory video. I hope these will be useful tools when presenting SMART Recovery® to people who want to learn what SMART Recovery® is all about.

We have discontinued the Thursday meeting, as the negative cash flow was not helping us to further our goals of continued expansion in Calgary and Alberta. Meeting attendance was sporadic, and we just don't have enough



practicalrecovery.com
858-453-4777

La Jolla (San Diego), CA; PSY7732

advertisement

Published by the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Self-Help Network, Inc. D.B.A. SMART Recovery®

7304 Mentor Avenue, Suite F, Mentor, OH 44060 • Phone: 440/951-5357 • Fax: 440/951-5358 • E-mail: info@smartrecovery.org • www.smartrecovery.org

facilitator power to continue with the extra meeting. The money would be better spent in traveling and presenting SMART Recovery® to other centres that would benefit from the SMART Recovery® Program.

Edmonton is up and running, as you can see from the Edmonton update. They are doing amazing things up there! I wish continued success to Dan and Tim!

The San Diego convention was amazing! I had a blast, as did all who attended. If you were not able to attend, allow yourself vacation time to be there next year, and you won't be disappointed!

Stay happy, stay clean, stay SMART!

— Curtis Boudreau

SMART Recovery® in Edmonton, Alberta

by Daniel Mallett

Thanks to some help from SMART Recovery® Calgary (thanks Curtis!), the courage of Tim to step up as our meeting facilitator (thanks Tim!), and the help of SMART Recovery® volunteers and staff, a face-to-face SMART Recovery® meeting is up and running in Edmonton, Alberta. We'd also like to thank AlbertaSam, an facilitator from SMART Recovery® Online, who drove several hours from northern Alberta to attend our first meeting. He provided much experience, enthusiasm, and materials to our start-up group.

We were lucky enough to find an affordable meeting space thanks to a local Unitarian Church. As of December 1, we've had five meetings, with attendance averaging five or six people. It is encouraging to have newcomers show up at meetings and call for more information after seeing our meeting information on SMART Recovery®'s website. We

hope we are providing something valuable to our community, and look forward to creating a positive culture of sobriety for people in Edmonton who are seeking an alternative to traditional recovery groups.

Thus far, our meetings have focused on building motivation and coping with urges. We've had a lot of positive discussion, but are still very new to the whole process. We know we have much to learn and improve upon. "Be patient, but be persistent" is probably our motto. We are actively looking for more meeting participants and facilitators. If you live in or visit the Edmonton area, please come and join us!

— Thank you, SMART Recovery®!



SMART Ideas

How To Pass the Hat and Get Some Money in It. A Treatment Plan

by Bill A, Facilitator & Massachusetts Regional Advisor (a.k.a. Dr. BS of Burlington)

Contributions at the end of a SMART Recovery® meeting constitute the life's blood of the program and thus are exceedingly important to its continuing growth and success. Yet, in many instances, there is little to show for the effort—if there is an effort at all. This is a primer, which works, on how to do

it... successfully and painlessly.

There are a number of ways to encourage contributions, which I will come to in a moment, but the most important part of "A Treatment Plan" message to get across here is that you need to get over the shyness or the reluctance to ask for money in the first place. For some reason, most people just seem innately reluctant to ask...as if there is something wrong with it. There isn't—get over it—Just do it...Ask!

The facts are that many participants are able to contribute, want to be helpful, and express gratitude for the usefulness of meetings. Thus, it is only a matter of asking. Although it may look difficult, it really isn't. So the question is more *how* to do it than *whether* to do it... and it's easy once you get used to it (like a lot of things).

With characteristic modesty, I'd have to relate that I am reasonably successful at getting money. Long ago, like most people, I was reluctant to ask for money. But in my professional life I learned to be bold and ask for help when I really needed it for various important projects. It was get money or lose an important initiative or program. Once beyond that initial reluctance, it becomes easy.

The first way to approach it is just say, "It is now time to pass the hat. SMART Recovery® really needs the money—it sponsors umpteen meetings around the world plus a comprehensive website all on a shoestring budget," etc., etc. It really does not work very well, and I don't use it.

It has been said that likening the contribution at the end of the meeting as like contributing the same as the cost of a single drink which these days in a bar cost upwards of five U.S. dollars. Happily, I just learned that number is

Published by the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Self-Help Network, Inc. D.B.A. SMART Recovery®

7304 Mentor Avenue, Suite F, Mentor, OH 44060 • Phone: 440/951-5357 • Fax: 440/951-5358 • E-mail: info@smartrecovery.org • www.smartrecovery.org

way out of date—drinks cost more now! Anyhow, this works fairly well. The expression of need seems to work better with perhaps some gentle chiding about how money may be better spent if it goes to SMART Recovery® than to other things. This gets some laughs.

More recently, I pointed out that the cost of an hour of therapy with a professional costs anywhere from \$60 for a social worker to \$250 for a psychiatrist in this part of the country. This gets more laughs and more money.

But what has worked the best is to merely say that although meetings are free, SMART Recovery® has costs to cover. Many participants have been to a twelve-step meeting. There the traditional amount is a dollar. Of course, then they think we are the same... hence we need to tell them we are different in this way. Further that there is no right amount, but a good amount is five dollars. I then seed the hat with a five dollar bill.

In the final analysis, I find that just saying that the suggested amount is five dollars works as well as anything more

elaborate. “Give what you can—a suggested amount is five dollars.”

The first time I tried this I got \$5 from everyone in the room. Unfortunately there were only seven instead of 700, but what the heck?!

So bottom line? Try it—it works!

Make Contact, Don't Push

by **Hank Robb, PhD, ABPP**

Here's a little exercise you might try with almost anyone. Ask the person to put his or her hand up with the palm facing you. Put your hand against the person's hand and “push” just a little. Chances are you will find he or she pushes back. And likely, the harder you push, the harder the other person pushes back. While both of you are busy pushing, ask this question, “How much flexibility do we have now?” The answer is, “Almost none.”

“Pushing back” might be said to be “natural” in the sense that it almost always happens. I've never started this exercise and had the person not push back. It's not necessarily a helpful

response, if you'd like flexibility in your life. Try the same activity, but this time have each of you “give” with the push. One hand may be going backwards as the other goes forward, but you also have a lot more flexibility to move your hands side to side. Giving way to a “push” can give you more flexibility to deal with it than “pushing back.”

OK, pull your hand away. That's what it's like to be “out of contact.” There's nothing there to feel. You can choose to remain “in contact” and “flexible” at the same time. A lot of addictive behavior isn't so much about “pushing” as it is about being “out of contact” with life as we find it.

This metaphor can prove useful with difficult thoughts, difficult urges, and difficult people! First, maintain contact. Second, don't push back. You feel the pressure and just give with it, while also maintaining the flexibility to move from side to side. One thing that's almost certain about thoughts and urges: ride with them a while and they “get tired.” If you remain flexible, after a while, they “run out of steam.” I can't be as

confident this will happen with difficult people! But generally, my observation is that they, too, will run out of steam if you don't get yourself all steamed up about them.

What beliefs might you look for that will “push you” to “push back”? Well, I'd start with demandingness. He, she, or it **MUST NOT** push on me! And when you stick

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 (**D**estructive **I**mages **S**elf-talk **A**wareness and **R**efusal **M**ethod)
- 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.

Published by the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Self-Help Network, Inc. D.B.A. SMART Recovery®

7304 Mentor Avenue, Suite F, Mentor, OH 44060 • Phone: 440/951-5357 • Fax: 440/951-5358 • E-mail: info@smartrecovery.org • www.smartrecovery.org

with that, what happens to your flexibility? Out the window! “It’s AWFUL” and “I CAN’T STAND it” are also good candidates. You’ll know how to dispute these beliefs when you find them, but the point here is for what purpose? The answer is to stay in contact with the world as you find it while also being able to remain flexible in the way you respond to it.

Tips to Stay Clean and Sober

by Patrick Gamett, Volunteer Facilitator and Regional Coordinator, Illinois

Treatment/Meetings/Support

- Consider seeing a therapist who has experience with addiction.
- Consider going to long-term treatment or at least outpatient treatment to kick-start your recovery and learn tools you can use to stay sober. Use what you learn. Most of the tools you learned take constant practice.
- Go to aftercare once you leave treatment.
- Consider moving into a Sober House.
- Find support groups to attend and be honest and listen. Try arriving early and staying late to meet others in recovery.
- Develop a network of support and include people who are in recovery and have more time than you. These are people who can help hold you accountable and can explain what has worked for them and what has not. Keep their phone numbers in your wallet or listed in a group on your phone.
- Be a support to others in recovery.
- Find a sober buddy who can help you learn and practice these tools. Having a sober buddy can make it

easier to get involved in groups/activities/fellowship. A buddy can help keep you from isolating.

- Do fellowship activities with other sober people, so you can learn how to do things without using/drinking.
- Be willing to accept constructive input (suggestions) from other recovery people about what has worked in their lives.
- If you go to the same recovery meetings all the time, switch it up and go to a completely new meeting. You may learn something new or meet a new sober friend.

Triggers/Cravings/Urges/Avoiding Relapse

- Understand triggers/cravings/urges. A trigger is a sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, feeling, action, image, or idea that cues the desire to use. These include people, places, things, or times of the day, month, season, or year, which offer drinking/using opportunities or remind you to drink/use. Often, cravings and urges are our longing for things to be different from the way they are in the moment. Dr. Alan Marlatt, the Director of the Addictive Behavior Research Center at the University of Washington, defines a craving as the desire to experience the effects of engaging in the addictive behavior, while an urge is a relatively sudden impulse to engage in an act such as drinking, shopping, or gambling in order to feel the high. Urges and cravings often feel as if they strike without warning, but if you pause to think about it when it happens, you’ll find that the urge may have been set off by a fleeting thought, a positive emotion such as excite-

ment, a negative emotion such as frustration, or a physical sensation such as a headache, tension, or nervousness. Learn your triggers and do what it takes to avoid them, especially external triggers, when possible and have plans ready for when you inevitably feel like using/drinking. Consider tracking and analyzing your triggers/urges for a couple of weeks. Become the observer of yourself.

- Have plans for when you have urges/cravings. The time to learn how to navigate is not in the middle of a storm. It is normal and common to have urges/cravings. Remember they will not kill you and they will pass. They may be very unpleasant, but you do not have to give in to them. Call someone, go to a meeting, work on one of your new hobbies/goals, challenge your thoughts, meditate/pray, go to bed. If you call someone, don’t talk about yourself, ask them what is going on with them so you can learn to be less self-centered.
- Do not use or drink, no matter what... NO MATTER WHAT!
- Ignore pessimistic reports about relapse rates. You are creating your own success.
- Make a zero tolerance policy with yourself concerning decisions to use/drink. Don’t even allow your mind to go there. Relapses usually start in your thoughts well before you take that first drink/drug. Become the observer of your thoughts and share with others. Remember that relapse is not inevitable, it is a choice.
- Ask yourself this question: “When I use/drink, what need am I trying to fill?”

- If internet porn or just the internet is an addiction or a way to hookup for sex/drug addictions, then consider having a friend install Netnanny to block pornographic websites. It works, and it's a comfort to know you can use your computer without temptation.
- Be careful of HALT: Being hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. These can trigger you to use.
- If you are feeling *restless, irritable, or discontented*, **WARNING!** **WARNING!** Be aware and take action. This is a time when we tend to turn to old behaviors to get by, such as using or drinking. Research **PAWS** (Post Acute Withdrawal Symptoms) so you can understand what you will experience. PAWS are symptoms you may experience after quitting. These symptoms may intensify three to six months after you choose abstinence. These can happen on sobriety anniversary dates such as one month, six months, and one year, and can be triggers. A big part of PAWS is learning to deal with stress without addictive behaviors. (http://www.tlctx.com/ar_pages/paw_part1.htm)
- Learn to take in very deep breaths (in your nose, out your mouth, repeat three times) throughout the day and especially when you are feeling anxious.
- If there is a party or event you think may be triggering, why go? But if you decide to go, have an escape plan such as driving your own car. Let a sober support know where you will be and if you are feeling uncomfortable at the event, text your support to call

you with an excuse to leave. But realize you need no excuses—if you need to remove yourself, just leave.

- Have responses ready if you are offered an alcoholic drink. One of the best is, “No thanks, do you have diet soda/juice/water, etc.?” Feel confident in saying, “I don’t drink.” Not drinking is a GOOD thing for you, so train yourself to feel comfortable saying no.
- If anger is a trigger for you, learn to walk away and use breathing techniques to calm down.
- If you relapse, get up, brush yourself off and get right back on track. Practice not beating yourself up. Then ask yourself what you were thinking right before you used/ drank. Determine (being honest with yourself) what you need to change or do differently. If you have a therapist or sponsor, get his or her help in this process.
- If being alone at night is triggering for you, consider getting a roommate who is also sober.

Mental and Emotional Health

- Learn and practice Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)
- Meditate to learn to listen to your self.
- Learn that you are not perfect and you never will be. And that’s okay. No one else is either.
- Don’t keep secrets; they can contribute to relapse. No matter how bad you think something you did is, many of us in recovery have done worse and will not be shocked, and we are not delegated judges and juries. Get it out, move on. Period.
- Recovery is a process of emotional maturity. When you’re using, you

are not fully feeling the events that are the raw material that we turn into emotional maturity. Compulsive substance abuse keeps them distant from you. Be ready for raw feelings to start to emerge the longer you are clean and sober.

- Learn to ride the waves of your emotions.
- Use mindfulness and a heightened awareness to overcome ego. Use meditation to overcome self.
- Forgive yourself and move on with your life. If you are having trouble with moving on, then see a therapist to help you work through your past.
- Elevate your consciousness. Watch your own mind and see how it responds to events. Repeat often. Learn.
- Keep an open mind to new ideas or ways of doing things. Strive to become emotionally resilient.

Changing Your Thinking

- Learn to be honest with yourself and keep expanding this ability.
- Use REBT to challenge your beliefs and distorted thinking. Some examples of distorted thinking include minimizing the negative results of your using; all-or-nothing thinking where you see things as completely good or bad, perfect or awful, and events are wonderful or disastrous; over-generalization, such as making one mistake and then thinking you are a mistake; negative focus and predicting the future (negatively) without facts; emotional reasoning, such as “I feel hopeless, so the situation must be really hopeless”; Should statements, in which you guide your actions by what you think you should or

shouldn't do and beat yourself up with guilt and shame when you fail to meet those standards; judging and labeling where you judge yourself and others instead of judging your actions or their actions; taking things personally by seeing other people's actions as being aimed at you, and you feel responsible for things you do not control.

- Use the ABCs worksheet to challenge your beliefs. (http://www.smartrecovery.org/resources/library/Tools_and_Homework/Quick_Reference/ABC_crash_course.pdf)
- Life is not black and white. Adults learn that living life on life's terms means learning to live in the area in between. Stay away from extremes. Between black and white are all of the colors of the world.
- Don't take yourself too seriously.

Self-Care

- Learn to care for yourself. Learn to eat healthfully and take a vitamin and get plenty of rest. Take care of yourself physically. Exercise. Take a walk. Practice yoga. Have regular dental exams and doctor visits. No excuses.
- Learn to slow down (practice balance). Find ways to relax and get enough sleep.
- Ask yourself with each decision: "Is this the healthiest choice for me right now?"
- Quit smoking cigarettes. But if the only thing between you and a drink/using is a cigarette, then smoke it up.
- Be alert for nagging depression and/or anxiety that does not improve with time. See a professional.
- If you are supposed to take medicine, take it.

Taking Action

- Don't confuse enthusiasm and intention for action. Figure out what you need to do to stay sober and then **do it**. What works, keep doing, what doesn't work for you, then stop and find something else that does.
- Start reading inspirational books focused specifically on sober living skills.
- Don't just focus on *not* using/drinking. Focus on **doing/creating**. Face forward and focus on the future and replace any using/drinking time with new interests (hobbies, cooking, exercise, team sports, travel, volunteering, yoga, art work, singing, dancing, solving puzzles, teaching someone something, going back to school). You would do well to create a NEW REALITY for yourself. Start slow and add things as you go. Think of one thing you have always wanted to do then do it. You need to fill the void you used to fill with using.
- Find positive support that makes you feel good and leads toward health and recovery. For example, if you like writing, join a writing group. Choose activities or hobbies that increase your self-acceptance, self-efficacy, and self-confidence. Increasing those ways of thinking will increase your chances of staying sober, and staying sober will help increase those ways of thinking.
- Clean your house and consider re-arranging your furniture (fresh start)
- Get to know yourself and your values and goals (journal, yoga, meditation)

- Write a letter to your addiction where you say farewell to it.
- Join a recovery forum online (smartrecovery.org or lifering.com for example) Online meetings can also be good for those who travel.
- Reconnect with your family and spend time with them—if they are a positive force in your life.
- Sit down and write two goals for yourself: one big and one little. Keep the paper in your pocket. Learn to set daily, weekly, etc. goals.
- Inspire others to grow. Challenge them in some way. Encourage them through your own success.
- Turn off your television and read a book. *Better*: read recovery literature. *Best*: write your own recovery literature.
- Write your "bucket list." Then, act.
- Once you have some clean time, raise the bar. Stop settling. Use your talents as a gift to the world and make a difference in some way.
- Look at your finances. If they are a wreck from years of avoidance, get professional help to deal with impending crisis, get you on track, and lessen your stress.

Relationships With Others

- Learn how to communicate your feelings and your preferences.
- Practice forgiveness. Forgive all your past transgressors. Forgive yourself. This can help to attain long-term relief from resentment. Resentments, especially toward others, can very quickly lead you to drinking/using.
- Practice humility.
- Always be in "learning mode."
- Remain open-minded.
- Treat others like you would like to be treated or you treat yourself.

- Be careful of getting involved in a new relationship too intensely and too fast. Many people in mainstream recovery programs suggest you avoid a new love interest until after a year of sobriety, as this year is your time to learn about yourself.
- Learn to set strong boundaries. Five steps are 1) Define the boundaries you need to set. 2) Inform the person involved. 3) Make a request and get a commitment. 4) When necessary, require that the boundary be observed. 5) Walk away without resentment.
- Accept other people for who they are and where they are. Do not expect them to go into recovery just because you did.

General Tips

- You are NOT ALONE. Others understand and have been where you are.
- Don't underestimate your addiction. Every single person does at first. Your sobriety had better come above all else—or else! Try investing the same amount of time into your recovery that you invested in your addiction.
- Postpone major decisions until you have a clean head. Focus on what is right in front of you and needs to be done today. Be careful not to look too far ahead and overwhelm yourself. Easy does it, but do it.
- Consider why you are wishing to be clean and sober. Write this down and keep in your wallet. Refer to often.
- Learn to make SACRIFICES. Be alert of any impulsive actions/decisions/purchases. Recovery is learning to put off using/drinking for long-term growth.
- Learn to take one day at a time. Just focus on staying sober/clean

today or just this hour, minute, or second. Then do it again.

- Keep a high price on your serenity. Don't sacrifice it for just anyone or your whims.
- You are creating a life of recovery and you are responsible for ALL OF IT. Yes, others can help you. Their "help" cannot make you recover. It is up to you to recover.
- Each morning and night, look at yourself in the mirror and staring into your eyes, tell yourself, "I love you."
- Recovery is part of your personal growth. Remember this is not a destination but a journey.
- Each night before you go to bed, tell yourself, "Good job," and think about all the things from that day for which you can feel grateful.

Never give up! You are worth it!

(Changes/suggestion please email pgarnett1200@gmail.com)



Let Me Shine!

by [angela_c](#), Online meeting helper

My name is Angela and I have never really written about my recovery like this... I have simply lived and experienced it. I now know that until August 8th, 2009, I had merely been "existing."

I was not a happy child, teen, or young adult, even though my life was

one that many would love to have had. For some unknown reason I always thought I deserved more, life was not fair, and that everyone was against me. I wanted to be happy but just did not know how to be. I was always the "woe is me" victim.

I was always searching for happiness and only recently learned that it did not come from external things but from within. It does not happen overnight either; it does take work. I had to change my behaviors and irrational thought habits. If I can do it, anyone can!

My recovery started with meeting some incredible people in the SMART Recovery® chat room on August 8th, 2009. I knew I needed help and I found SMART Recovery® by researching alcohol addiction online. I had tried 12-step programs a couple of times in the past, but for me the powerlessness term just depressed me even more. I know 12-step does work for many but I was so low I felt my Higher Power had abandoned me. In hindsight, I now think that my Higher Power gives each of us the intelligence and ability to be in control of our lives and our happiness. It is not contingent upon just having faith.

Immediately, I felt a sense of enlightenment with the new friends I found in the chat room and I learned about the online meetings. I have always thought that I was intelligent and felt as if I had finally met others who understood me; I wanted to learn from their experiences and knowledge. The CBA tool woke me up and an article titled, "Who Controls You?" gave me hope and the initiative to look within. The toolbox intrigued me and I made myself a notebook of all the tools, and I still refer to it today. I call it my "treasure chest": http://www.smartrecovery.org/resourc...ntrols_You.pdf

I became very involved in my daily online meetings, asking for a verification of all these meetings, which I carried with me to my court appearance which was not until June of this past year. You should have seen how thick my folder was! A few months in I also became a SMART Recovery® Meeting Helper as I felt a calling to help others who may be feeling as lost as I once was. At my court appearance I was, I have learned, the first person in the county to be allowed to continue my recovery work with SMART Recovery® instead of being ordered to attend AA.

I looked forward to my daily SMART Recovery® meetings and always went to bed each night with a thing or two to ponder that helped me “shine” in my early recovery. I learned more about the tools and the reasons my life had been a mere existence. I learned to recognize and change the things that cause me grief, anxiety, and misery. I also learned to look at long-term goals and that my selfish thinking of a “quick fix” solution was so very irrational. I did not get where I was overnight, so I certainly could not expect to be fixed overnight.

Long story short, this past year has been the most gratifying of my life. I am in control of my life and my destiny. When I need a boost or a reminder I have more at my fingertips and in my head than I could ever ask for. I accept things. I am grateful and appreciative. I can stop self-defeating thoughts like nobody’s business! And I am becoming the person I was always meant to be.

Thank you for helping me identify that we all have it within ourselves to “shine” in our own way!

Editor’s Note: Thank YOU, angela_c, for helping so many of the rest of us by sharing your experiences. Keep up the

good work! And, BTW, a number of federal appeal court decisions and state Supreme Court decisions have held that it is unconstitutional for agents of the government to mandate attendance at 12-step meetings.

I have achieved...3 years sober!

by *Iain (a.k.a. Beefer online)*

I had my last alcoholic drink on the 30th of October 2007. Halloween was my first day sober so that is the day I started on my road to recovery.

Three years—it was a long time ago. I didn’t think I could achieve three days. I worked at it, used the tools here at SMART Recovery®, and here I am!

I hear this a lot on the message boards: **“If I can do it, anyone can!”** This is so true when it comes to me.

I was drinking two sometimes three bottles of wine + 24 cans of beer and sometimes a bottle of strong cider A NIGHT.

I didn’t see anything wrong with it. I was doing the same as everyone else having a drink after a day at work, relaxing and unwinding. I wasn’t though.

The truth is I was putting my life and other’s lives at risk (drinking that amount and driving a bus the next day is pure stupidity). I am lucky that I am here to tell the tale, not in prison or worse yet, dead.

I was causing problems for my family emotionally and financially. I had a family. I lived in the same house as them but was never there for them.

I lost time off work and had less money coming in but I could still find money for alcohol. My daughter has seen me wet and with sick down the front of me. She is only nine.

Three years on and my daughter has a daddy to be proud of, I have a wife whom I love and owe my life to. She has been my rock and stood by me through thick and thin when all others had given up on me. (I had even given up on myself a few times.)

I have had to work hard to win back the trust of my daughter and to gain a wife (two years married last February). Emotionally it has been a rollercoaster ride, from the day I got married been such a high to other days when I just wanted to give up and say “Ah, F**k it.”

On those days and even weeks, I came to SMART Recovery® online and posted on the message boards and people helped me look at the situation in a different way, and helped guide me towards tools I was not using as I was trying to give myself an excuse to drink alcohol. I have used DISARM many, many times. I have fought those urges, YES, it is true an urge is NOT going to kill you, but giving in to that urge just might.

I take an active role in promoting SMART Recovery® here in the UK, I help control the UK message boards and I keep the SMART Recovery® UK Facebook page updated. I also volunteer here at SMART Recovery® Online. One off the best decisions I have ever made.

I plan to become an online facilitator and even a F2F facilitator in the future. Work commitments are holding me back at the moment.

The best thing I did was decide to become sober. It could be the best thing you do today as well.

It’s no TRICK to have come so far but it is a TREAT to be here! Happy Holidays, everyone!

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

©2010 ADASHN, Inc., 7304 Mentor Avenue, Suite F, Mentor, OH 44060, all rights reserved.
All statements regarding self-help in this newsletter are the views of the author and are not an official endorsement of the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Self-Help Network, Inc.