

BUGGIN' OUT!

Newsletter

Applying Biblical Truth and Humor to the Struggle.

Recovery Burnout

Robert, you're supposed to be Jesus Christ to your brethren...not the slut at the well.

It was a rotten thing for my accountability partner to accuse me of, but deep in my heart I knew he was right. Why I got dressed and told Steve I was going to a gay club made no sense whatsoever; my cravings for men were now weaker than ever, my relationship with Jesus was growing stronger, and I was on the second year of maintaining sexual integrity.

Actually, I knew the exact reason I threatened to go out...I was **bored....bored** with walking away, **bored** with abstinence, and **bored** with not being depressed all the time (if that makes any sense.) Now that I was gaining ground on sweet sanity, I started to crave excitement. Sure, there were still issues to address and more healing to be had, but I wasn't passionate about attaining them like I used to be. All the symptoms were there ...I had an acute case of *Recovery Burnout*.

For those of you who are innocent, *Recovery Burnout* is an aggressive condition that strikes without warning. You wake up one morning and realize every friend you have either **1) has** walked away from homosexuality, **2) is** walking away from homosexuality, **3) is considering** walking away from homosexuality, or **4) has** a loved one who is **not** walking away from homosexuality. Your support group is down to a membership of three, and the ex-gay homepage you spent six months designing has gotten only one response: a hate letter telling you to get a life. You then turn on the T.V. to get your mind off it all and witness two same-sex kisses on an *Ellen* rerun, three overtly closeted buddies on *Friends*, and promiscuity running rampant among the wolverines on the *Discovery* channel. You shut down your computer, flip off the T.V., look up to Heaven and scream *I can't stand it anymore....I need more excitement. I need some suspense. I need a change.*

Let's face it. A major attraction of the gay life is the adventure it offers. You can go to a gay club and watch go-go boys pulsate their pelvises in your face. You can pop in a gay theater and pass time guessing who is behind Door #1, what's happening behind Door #2, and how you're gonna

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manipulate your way into the arms of the stud behind Door #3. And, before you know it, the night is over and it's time to go home.

Recovery is somewhat different. It drudges along uneventfully. No mystery. No intrigue. No excitement. Personally, I like an occasional rush. Even as a child, I always hungered to be part of the action in the show *Charlie's Angels*. I would pretend I was the fourth angel. Jill, Kelly, Sabrina and I would drive around in small Fords, solve crimes and flip bad guys over our shoulders. I never lost the infatuation. So, in an effort to grab a handful of excitement and glitz, I began to look at the gay life again.

Accountability partners are wonderful things. Instead of allowing me to regress, Steve came undone on me. At the end of what I call his *slut at the well symposium*, he asked me what my lifelong dream was and then told me I should be ashamed of myself for not pursuing it.

He then sat me down, played the theme to *Laverne and Shirley* for background (Steve's not issue-free yet either) and ordered me to get working on my dream.

Somewhere along the way, I had forgotten about my dreams. I only remember them being somewhat inconsistent. They ranged from having Focus on the Family ask me to fill Dr. Dobson's position when he retires, to being Erik Estrada's live-in houseboy. But, through all the madness, there was one dream that survived. I wanted to write.

Over the next year, I worked feverishly. For hours I would sit in the mall food court (the only place I feel inspired) and stare at the pad and fiddle with the pen. A voice would remind me that I could be at a gay club if I wished. It was a trial of faith and determination. I knew I needed God's help and I asked Him to guide my thoughts to fill the blank pages. Precisely one year after Steve scolded me, an article I submitted about traffic was published in a local paper. (Prior to that, my only claim to fame was a letter of complaint I wrote to the management at the YMCA, after I noticed fungus and mildew in the shower stalls. It got published in their monthly newsletter with a promise to address the situation, but I don't feel legit counting that one.) And a few months later, I completed a little booklet to reach men trapped in gay sex houses (like many of us used to be). It was called Buggin' Out!

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Because it contained a lot of my private dirt, I planned on keeping it low-key. Steve had other plans. Behind my back, he started mailing it out and, somehow, it caught on. Without even realizing it, I had become an amateur writer. The Lord had given me the desires of my heart. *(Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Psalms 37:4)*

The moral? When *Recovery Burnout* hits, it is not a sign you are regressing into homosexuality. It's an indication that you have become stagnant and the time has come to move forward. For most of us, homosexuality was always our excuse for not pursuing our dreams. But, the purpose of seeking recovery is to celebrate life, in spite of our issues, and to re-enter the real world from which many of us have withdrawn ourselves, as **functional** and **powerful** human beings. Once you get excited over life again, the burnout quietly subsides.

Identify your dream and go for it...recovery can feel so good!

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