

One Year Since...

Telling others...Self Acceptance...and Success

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Just got back from my annual one week family fishing trip in northern Minnesota, parents, sister, brother, brother-in-law, wife, daughter, etc. - 11 of us in 3 cabins. It was one year ago that I decided that I had to do something about my shy bladder. I had problems on the trip last year, nervous about where to stop while we traveled up to the lake, problems voiding prior to going out to fish, problems on longer fishing outings, dehydration, stress, etc. NOT THIS YEAR, thanks to Steve Soifer and all the others involved in the IPA.

This year was different, no major problems, mostly worry free and I didn't have to hide, I didn't have to keep a secret and I was able to void and be comfortable in my surroundings.

This was my second fishing trip to northern Minnesota this summer with the first one being a major success with my 31 year old stepson. I had told him about my AP on advise from Carl. Since then he has given me great support and friendship. So prior to this trip I called up my brother-in-law (who we would be picking up, traveling with and sharing a cabin with) and told him about my AP. I explained that I had found that if I told people about my problem that I would be more relaxed around them and be more successful. He related his prostrate problems with me and his difficulty voiding because of it. I think it also helped relax him more about the trip.

Here is a quick list of my success:

1. First stop a busy Interstate rest area - used stall, stood and peed, but slightly nervous and voided 80% to 90%.
2. Second and fourth stops - vacant bathrooms and completely voided.
3. Third stop gas station - when I went in my brother-in-law was standing and going in the only stall, my stepdaughters boyfriend was using/finishing at one urinal so I took the other. There was a divider and because I was relaxed, had not over obsessed prior to going in and I had higher urgency (7 to 8) I was able to go almost immediately.
4. No problems in the bathroom in our small cabin with 4 other people in the cabin. I always went standing up. Sometimes I turned on the water in the sink and thought to myself that it was okay to do that, I wasn't hiding or masking, it was just something that I might do from time to time to help myself a little to get started.
5. While fishing with my daughter and her boyfriend we stopped once on an island to pee, they when in the woods, I stayed with the boat and peed there into the lake splashing away.
6. While fishing with just my wife I peed once from the boat while in the middle of the lake.
7. While fishing with just my brother-in-law, I peed 5 times from the boat. Besides the gas station stop on the way up to the lake, this was the first 5 times that I had ever peed in his presents. Telling him totally relaxed me around him. When I peed my urgency level was typically a 3 to a 5.
8. On the trip home I just happened to hit 4 vacant restrooms - not planning that, and one busy one. The busy one was a sporting goods superstore with 3 stalls (all full and someone waiting for

a stall) and 3 urinals with dividers and the middle one being used. I had a higher urgency (8), went to the urinal and started almost immediately, what a nice feeling.

Another step I told on this trip was to tell my mother about my problem. We are very close and I have always been able to talk to her easily, but had never told her (in 1978 a mental health professional had told me not to tell family and friends about my problem - so I had kept this all a secret for all these years). I find that by telling others that I now feel like I am accepting myself more for who I am and becoming more relaxed because of it, thanks again to Carl's advise.

How did I get here:

1. Found Steve Stoifer's Book on Amazon.com, read it, called him and signed up for my first workshop in November of 2003.
2. Took Carl's advise about telling others and have slowly been adding people to the list that now know about my AP.
3. Saw my family doctor and got on the SSRI called Lexapro and got Lorazepam to relax lower muscles for one time uses.
4. Read and studied Phobase booklets & tapes and Free to Pee book.
5. Learned to self-cath as a back-up plan for myself, but have never "had to" self-cath because of other successful work I have been doing.
6. Posted and found a pee buddy. Had our own weekend workshop with him while we watch Steve and Carl on video tape (he traveled over 200 miles to work with me).
7. Read postings and found second and more active pee buddy in my same town. We work together 1 to 3 times per week.
8. Went to second workshop in February of 2004 and drove over 700 miles to get there with a friend from first workshop (John from Detroit area) and made it 5 full days of practice while typically never releasing more than 50% to 65% of my urine in each session so I could get as many starts and stops as possible during those 5 days. During this trip I had over 100 starts in a row without a misfire.
9. Got active on IPA posting board. Got active with IPA through Richard and now serve as committee chairperson of the Education Committee. Also working with board members on the drug testing committee - unknowingly appointed by Phil, which is great, thanks for trusting and including me. Openly talking and working to help others has relaxed me more, helped me to accept myself and has taught me more about what I also need to do.
10. Got active outside IPA with the State of Iowa Ombudsman office and their treatment of a prisoner in Iowa. Again, openly talked about my AP.
11. Went on a 5 day fishing trip with my son and peed from a boat 11 times and in our cabin with the door open almost everytime. It was like a real life workshop and 5 of the best days of life.
12. I now have an attitude that I need to do the opposite of what I did in the past. Sit in public areas with my back to the restroom so I don't worry about if it's vacant. Don't pre-plan bathroom trips, only go when I naturally feel the need to go when my urgency is high enough for the situation. Don't worry about whether or not I'm successful at voiding, as I know I will always be able to go later and I'm not the only one that has problems starting at times. Use Phobase tools to stop over obsessing thoughts.

Thank you Steve, Carl, Richard, Phil, Chris, David, Tom, John, Carol, other board members, members of the Education committee, other great posters, workshop friends, pee buddies and other authors Howard L., Christopher M. and Jeffrey S. - I still need your help, but now feel I'm at least halfway through my recovery.

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