

## **Hooked On Recovery**

November 18, 2005

*Best and Worst*

At our house we're never sure if we're going to have dinner together, or at what time. Heck, we don't even sit in the same seats every night. Except for Mary. She always sits in her high chair. and rules from there. Soccer practices, work schedules, dance lessons, church functions all interfere with the dinner hour, but every time we eat together we always do one thing: Best and Worst. We go around the table and tell each other about the best part of our day and the worst part. The rules are that you can not pass and no matter what your day was like you have to come up with a best part and a worst part. No exceptions. Except for Matty. Ever since he could talk Matty has been part of Best and Worst. In fact he is often the one to start it once we sit down. Matty has added his own twist (big surprise). Only until recently, he could not grasp the concept of "worst". He would always tell us the two best parts of his day. Sami would get the most exasperated.

"No Matty. Tell us about the YUCKIEST part of your day. The part you DIDN'T like."

"Going to Brooke's, having mac and cheese for lunch and playing with Transformers".

"Maaaaaaaattyy! You didn't say the WORST part and besides you gave us three things. What was the part you did not like?"

"Ohhhhhhhhh. Going to Brooke's, having mac and cheese for lunch and playing with Transformers".

Gee Sami, what part didn't you get the first time? Personally, I love the optimism of his three year old mind. Sandy and I also love this dinner table exchange. Many times we hear things that we might never have heard. Like what went on in the lunch room, or on the way home, or about a particular class, teacher or friend. It also helps me practice a recovery principle; looking back over a day, giving thanks for all the goodness in my life. It also helps me realize where I could have done better. And then of course, I have to "promptly admit it". My family now does the same.

When I was fishing at the Cape this past October, I had an interesting Best and Worst. We hit the beach after a major storm and there were no fish around, no bait, birds just sitting on the beach, everything was just quiet. After storms it often gets this way. The pounding surf had washed small piles of seaweed on the beach. Often you can find treasures in these piles in the form of lost lures. There were just a few trucks on the beach when I pulled off the track. Arno, Russ and I spread out and started kicking at promising piles. Arno quickly found an awesome Point Judith spoon. Russ uncovered a white Bluefish Bomb. I kicked at a pile close to the water line. Sure enough, a nice red and white Ranger was tangled up in it. After freeing the Ranger, I spied another pile a few hundred feet ahead. As I meandered to it, I sensed someone coming up along side me and a woman in waders (a rare sight for Race Point in October) passed me, walking briskly, making a beeline for the same pile I had my eye on. I picked up the pace. She broke into a jog and... and I gave up. She reached the pile first. After all I am a gentleman. Tossing her into the surf didn't seem appropriate. Never mind that she broke sacred surf fishing etiquette: the person who first spies the seaweed pile owns it. She knew that I saw it first. In that pile was a beautiful, new 3 ounce Kastmaster with a bright orange red tube over the hook; a sweet, sweet lure. It was all I could do to smile nicely and say "Nice lure". She said, "Thanks"

and grabbed the whole pile and brought it up to her truck and freed a couple more lures. As I walked back muttering obscenities under my breath, I realized I was being ridiculous. So I practiced another principle. I let it go. Really, I did. That was the worst part.

A few minutes later, we were back in the truck cruising the beach and looking for more seaweed piles. I spotted a beauty. As I got closer, I could see fishing line and burlap! That burlap bag could snag a lot of lures. This could be good! And it was! In that pile I pulled out three Rangers, a popper, a diamond jig, and a lead weight. That was by far my personal best lure harvest from a single seaweed pile. That was the best part of my day.

As we drove further down the beach, I wondered if by “letting go” of a brewing resentment, God had rewarded me. Then I thought about my family and my heart ached a little. How fun it would have been for them to be with me to discover this treasure. Then I smiled when I thought of Matty. Because Matty would have turned both those seaweed pile incidents into his Best and Worst. His voice whispered in my ear,

“Dad, you got some nice lures. And that lady did too.”

*Hooked on Recovery* is a biweekly message from CCAR Executive Director Phillip Valentine, person in recovery since 12/28/87, devoted husband, a father of five and just another surf fisherman. These thoughts, views and opinions reflect on his personal recovery and are not meant in any way to speak for the entire recovery community. He welcomes all your comments and suggestions on this column, email him at [phillip@ccar.us](mailto:phillip@ccar.us). Visit the website at [www.ccar.us](http://www.ccar.us) to read the entire series.