

Fuzzy Slipper

My first six months of sobriety was a little slippery. I was still dealing pot and living a double life. I'm grateful not to be doing that anymore.

My first shrink, Dennis, was a little too clinical and dry for my tastes, so after about 11 sessions I stopped going. I was in the market for a new shrink and was asking around for referrals from friends and what not. I was going to a regular meeting of AA every week for a while and I considered it my "home group."

One of the women there, who had about five years of sobriety, which I considered an incredible amount of time, told me about her great shrink, Dr. Lisa B. So I got her number and started going.

Lisa was a real pro. She had a Ph.D. in Psychology and had been a professional therapist for 20 years. She had the doctor thing down.

I spilled my guts to this angel of a therapist for four- and-a-half years and this woman knew EVERYTHING about me. I left no stone unturned. She knew every issue, every story, every detail, every thought, every dream; you name it, she knew it. We had a great run, and I believe she helped me immensely through my early recovery.

Lisa was a small woman, about 5' 2" and 110 pounds, with short, bobbed hair and a nice, big smile. She wasn't very curvy, but kind of waifish looking in a way, with small boobs and little hips. Not the typical type of woman I'd ever go for. I always liked the tall, curvy, pretty ones that are more girlie- looking.

Lisa always wore conservative clothes and had a great poker face. She always had a professional demeanor and was a very good therapist. She was an overachiever, recognized in the encyclopedia as one of the smartest young women in America. I think she received some award for scholastic achievement by President Clinton as well. Anyway, she was really together, and smarter than the average bear.

About two-and-a-half years after I started working with Dr. Lisa B, I met a pretty redhead and we moved in together. As usual, we had problems right away and I brought her with me to see Lisa and we tried to work it out together as a team.

My girlfriend was bisexual and a musician and had been in Playboy. She was also a part-time stripper. She wanted to bring another woman into our relationship and I was stupid enough to say that it wasn't healthy and that monogamy meant one person.

She also had a lot of highs and lows with her mood because when she was a little girl she had ovarian cancer and had her ovaries removed, which I have learned help regulate a woman's mood, among other things. So, she was WAY moody and we just couldn't find a way to make it work.

Lisa sort of advised me one-on-one that Sara, (the redhead) probably wasn't going to work out and that I should stay strong in my decision to have good boundaries. So, I eventually broke up with Sara because I listened to Lisa B.'s advice and because I was trying to work a good program, complete with boundaries and attempting to be a professional human being.

Fuzzy Slipper

Everything was moving along nicely and I was staying sober and getting a lot of recovery. I had joined several other 12-step programs and was getting plenty of advanced level recovery and doing the deep, hard, honest work that most AA people haven't gotten to yet.

I won't judge AA, but on many levels it's just the beginning of the journey, and many other programs build from that base and go way deeper into their specialized, detailed, cavernous, bottomless pit.

Recovery, just like anything, goes on to infinity and you can go as deep as you want to. It's a never-ending thing, and if you want to look very closely at any part of your life that's dysfunctional, there's a program for it.

A lot of people say Alanon is like grad school after AA. Some of the other 12 step programs that I went to were like getting a Ph.D., and then some.

The funny thing is, sometimes I still feel like I've barely scratched the surface of my recovery work; there's so much more to do.

Anyway, I was cruising along just fine in my recovery and making some progress in my career and getting a little success here and there.

Every now and then, I'd notice a flyer in Dr. Lisa B.'s waiting room for one of her little shows with her acoustic folk band. She played guitar and sang and appeared around L.A. at little folksy clubs and coffee shops. So, I knew she did music on the side here and there, but we never spoke much about her private life and I never really knew a whole lot about her.

One time, I went to see her play at Genghis Cohen, a little supper club in Hollywood that features bands and acoustic singer/songwriter types. Lisa was pretty good and I thought it was kinda cool that my therapist was gigging around town with her little 3-piece girl group. She was sort of like a cross between Joni Mitchell with some Joan Baez. She had a nice persona on stage and had some cute and funny anecdotes as she bantered with the crowd from time to time. She wasn't great, but didn't suck, and it was a fun show.

A short while later, after I'd seen her show, she asked me in a therapy session if I would be willing to do a trade with her. She wanted to make a demo at my studio and trade me her hours for my hours. After she asked me that, I paused and took a good moment to really think about it.

That moment became a turning point for Lisa and me. I didn't know it then, but a lot of things were about to change.

I told her, "You know Lisa, I probably wouldn't have been ready for something like this when I was newly sober, but it's been about four years now working with you and I feel like I have come a very long way, and I think I can totally handle producing your demo. Plus, it will be fun."

So, for the next three months, I stopped paying her and we started building up studio time hours.

Fuzzy Slipper

When the time finally came for Lisa to come over and start her demo she arrived a little late, and had her guitar with her. She looked about the same as she always did, but having her over at my apartment, sitting on my couch in my studio, was a totally different experience. I thought to myself how funny it was and that I had come a long way since first meeting her. I could feel the energy between her and me shifting from her being in absolute control and knowing 100% everything about me to me starting to get to know her as a person outside the controlled environment of a therapeutic office.

Lisa was a bit nervous at first. I told her to breath and stay grounded and that she was safe and not in any danger. I used a lot of techniques that she had taught me about anxiety, etc. I chuckled to myself how funny it was that I was now acting like HER therapist and she was starting to bare her soul to me and expose her flaws and fears. It was a cute moment and it felt healthy and good.

At one point she was saying how she was still uptight and that her neck bothered her, so I told her to stand up and I gave her a nice shoulder rub (like I always do whenever I see a woman in pain in that area). I'm a good hands-on healer type and this was just part of my routine.

She made the usual good sounds a woman makes when she's feeling good and was like, "Ooh, that feels soooooo good." Then we hugged each other nice and slow, like we always had after a therapy session, but this time it lasted longer than ever before and was a lot closer. We were bonding.

Lisa told me right then that she was really lonely. She said that her wife had left her a little while ago and that she was pretty shaken up by the whole thing.

I said "your wife"?

She said that she was bisexual and had loved men in the past as well.

All of a sudden I'm thinking... hmmm... Lisa is a pretty cool chick and now she's single. I never would have guessed that she was bisexual and had a wife and all this stuff going on in her private life. I always just used to think of her as my doctor and a great therapist I saw once a week in her little office. It never really occurred to me to think about her personal life because I knew NOTHING about it, at the time.

So, after telling me about being lonely and single and liking men, and after massaging her neck and shoulders and back, and after hugging for a long, slow, grinding moment, we ended our session and set up another one for the next week.

Lisa returned, looking a little different. She was wearing a nice, little, short skirt and had a bit of make up on. I had never really seen her in makeup before; she was always kind of Plain Jane-looking and never really wore much of anything on her face. She wasn't bad looking, just sort of average and not very sexy to me because she was small and had little boobs and a little butt and short hair and she wasn't really my type, in general, as far as sexually goes, etc.

Fuzzy Slipper

But this time, all of a sudden, with her cute little outfit and a bit of makeup, she looked like an attractive woman. She was probably in her early 40's and I was in my early 30's, so it wasn't like too big of an age difference-in the animal kingdom, certainly.

We started working on her song and cruised along for a while and then we took a little break and gave each other some nice massages, and somehow we ended up making out. It was really fun and cute and harmless and it just evolved naturally. She was no longer my therapist, but a single, cute, recording artist whom I had adored and loved for the past four years and who had helped me more than any other human on this planet, and she knew more about me than anyone in my family. She knew more about me than everyone I knew, combined! No joke.

The next week, we started working on her song some more and after we were finished, we started making out and I started grabbing her ass and she started grabbing my ass, and I pretty much just took her by the hand and said, "You're coming with me, little girl, back to my bedroom."

I pulled her pants off and started getting to work right away. We both got naked and I jumped on top of her. All of a sudden, she didn't seem so small because when you are horizontal with someone short it sort of evens up the playing field a little.

Anyway, we started making love and it was okay, not great, but certainly tolerable. She was kind of nervous and had her eyes all closed and she was checking out.

I was like, "Hey, Lisa, it's okay to open your eyes a little and say hello. I'm your friend and let's try connecting a little here as human beings and not just fuck, okay?"

She was really insecure and seemed really awkward and geeky and not a great lover, plus she was all disassociated and checking out every chance she could. But hey, I'm a guy, and I can live with a woman who isn't perfect in bed, plus this woman was a little angel and had practically saved my life. I thought I loved her because she knew me so well and had helped me through so many rough times. Little did I know...

In the middle of sex, I flat out joked, "So, I guess therapy is over now, huh?"

She chuckled back, "Yeah, I guess so."

Lisa and I started going out and at the same time we started playing music together, too. She was really cool about it and asked me if I wanted to play some of my songs. I had never publicly performed any of my songs because I was always too insecure to sing any of them. They were too personal and I had always been insecure about my voice. I have a decent voice, but I don't sing enough and it isn't as strong as it could be, although it's pretty decent-sounding when I get warmed up and don't feel too nervous.

We did a show together at Genghis Cohen. Lisa did a few of her songs, and I did a few of mine, and the show went really well. It was my first time singing my own songs at a club and I will be eternally grateful to Lisa for allowing me to work through my fear.

Fuzzy Slipper

We played around town and did some more little gigs. One time, we played at the Veterans' Hospital for a bunch of old war vets in wheelchairs; another time in a parking lot for a psych ward in Glendale; still another time for runaway teenagers in Hollywood. We were a big sensation for the invalids and runaways!

We had to come up with a name for our band. We both wanted a warm and fuzzy name, but I also realized that I was "slipping" in one of the programs I was in. Slipping means you're slipping back into your addiction or acting out.

When we made up the name "Fuzzy Slipper" we both burst out laughing and thought it was really cute and funny. I called one of my old clients who happened to also be a pretty good cartoonist and asked him to make a band logo for us. He was an eccentric songwriter-artist, old queen and a total character, and he had no problem with the concept of "Fuzzy Slipper."

We told him the basic vibe about who we were, and why we called it that and he came up with a cartoon drawing of two little bunnies sitting in a fuzzy slipper bunny canoe, paddling up stream. It was perfect.

Fuzzy Slipper was born!

I had been going to S.L.A.A. for several years at this point and finally decided to invite Lisa to a meeting because she was DEFINITELY a sex-and-love addict, like me (and 99% of the rest of the world of people in denial). She agreed to go and instantly identified and confessed that she was a true sex-and-love addict.

We both went to meetings together for many months and had a great time. She got commitments as secretary and treasurer, and literature like I had always done, and so we both kept on coming back. Everyone there knew about us, that we were both trying to get help and some clarity on our situation. No one judged us, and it was basically par for the course with everyone else.

There were prostitutes and exhibitionists, voyeurs, and flashers and fantasy addicts and sexual anorexics and everything in between. Believe it or not, it was a very advanced group of people ranging from doctors, lawyers, business owners and creative types. I met some of the coolest and most spiritual people there. As far as I'm concerned, EVERYONE on this planet could qualify for being a sex-and-love addict in one way or another.

But that's another story.

Lisa and I were both going to a lot of meetings and learning a lot about the disease and ourselves and our boundaries, etc. It's quite common for therapists to have sex with their clients; the national average is about ten percent. We also learned that the number of sex-and-love addicts in this country is growing at an epidemic rate, and it's still a mostly kept secret in the media. Once in a while you'll hear about it on the news or on Oprah or whatever, but, by and large, it's mostly a secret. That makes sense, considering how our country is based on a puritanical, outdated model that actually creates and promotes the disease by NOT talking about it. The disease loves secrecy and thrives when the lights are off.

Fuzzy Slipper

We heard that there was a weekend workshop up in Malibu at the Serra Retreat Center, run by Franciscan nuns. I had been there once before by myself and had a terrific time. We spent all weekend going to S.L.A.A. workshops and meetings and did step work and writing and sharing, then had sex all night. It was a total blast.

The whole idea of the retreat was to abstain from sex, and do the spiritual work to heal from our sex and love addiction! My sponsor was there and he knew about the whole thing. But he didn't judge us.

He just smiled and kept saying, "Keep coming back."

He was in school for psychology and was no angel, either. In his day, he told me he used to do poppers and screw up to 30 different men a night in the gay bathhouses of West Hollywood. That's a whole other level that goes beyond the scope of this story. He was a great sponsor, though, really committed to the program and totally of service.

After the weekend retreat was over, I sat Lisa down and told her that I really thought she needed to get 30 days abstinence from sex. I figured that if our relationship was going to grow, she needed to chill out for 30 days so she could get some clarity about us and herself, etc. She agreed to try. At that point, I became her temporary sponsor until she could find one of her own. My goodness, how things had changed since I first met her!

She emailed me the next day and told me that she was going crazy and couldn't make it for one day. She said that one of her clients, Charlie, was hitting on her and that she couldn't resist the temptation. So, she started fucking him. His wife had sent him there so that Lisa would help him with his infidelity and failing marriage. Little did she know that Lisa B. probably wasn't the ideal person to send her sex-addicted husband to.

I told Lisa that she had a disease that wanted her dead and ruined and that she had to do her best to work a good program and find a higher power that could help her stop the madness.

After about 20 days of trying to abstain and slipping, etc., Lisa finally had Charlie move in with her. I told her that I needed to distance myself from her for a while and good luck with her journey. She kept in touch with me via email for about six months, pouring out her soul that she was a sex-and- love addict and couldn't resist fucking all her clients.

She confessed that she had fucked many, many clients. When she was younger, she told me that she had a competition with another female therapist friend of hers to see how many they could get. I'm sure she must have had sex with several hundred men and women that were there to get help from HER.

At about this time, one of the men in one of my home groups approached me after a meeting and asked me if I would be interested in joining his men's therapy group in Beverly Hills because one of the guys there had left and an open slot was available. John P. was his name and he was a very well dressed, highly intelligent and a super cool guy. So I said sure and started going every Wednesday night. It was a terrific group, including a couple of famous actors, a couple of high- powered show biz types and me.

Fuzzy Slipper

When I first joined, I told my story and they asked me if I had a previous therapist and I told them all about her. They all just looked at me in horror and shook their heads in disbelief and acted like I had been raped or something crazy.

I was like, "What? It wasn't that big of a deal. We were really nice people and just a little mixed up is all."

They kept saying how horrible it was for me to be so taken advantage of and violated and blah-blah-blah... I told them that in most cases it might be like that, but in my case it was different and that it wasn't all that bad and that it was actually a very positive experience — mostly.

They kept saying how in denial I was and that I should report Lisa to the police and Southern California Psychology Board and get a lawyer and sue her and blah-blah-blah...

Finally, after about four months of that, I got tired of hearing all that crap and bailed on the group. When I finally told them I was stopping, the two therapists gave me a 20- page booklet on how "Therapy Should Never Include Sex with a Client" and all the info about how bad it is ethically, and how illegal it is, and how horrible it is to the psyche of the client, etc. I took the booklet with me and carefully put it away in my file cabinet. It sat there for about a year and I just went on with my life.

During that time, I met a girl and moved in with her right away (a common pattern with sex-and-love addicts).

One day, while driving around in Hollywood right by the Hollywood Bowl, I got a cell phone call. It was Lisa. I hadn't heard from her in about six months.

She asked me if I wanted to go to a movie.

I told her that my new girlfriend was in the car with me and that I was off the market.

She said she didn't care.

I asked her if she was still dating Charlie.

She said "Yes."

Then I asked her if he was still living with her and she said "Yes." I asked her if he was right there with her and she said "Yes."

So I asked her, "Why are you calling me now?" and she said that she just had a fight with him and wanted to use me to make him jealous.

Initially I thought that was pretty funny, and that if I were single I probably would have gone along with that, just for fun, but since I had a girlfriend now it wasn't cool.

She sort of understood and we hung up.

Fuzzy Slipper

Then a bell went off in my head.

That little tramp!

My men's group guys were right!

I should fuckin' report her skinny ass because that's just totally bogus and bizarre.

She wasn't fit to be a shrink and someone should do something about it and that someone should be ME!

When I got home I found the little booklet and read the whole thing. I was going to bust Dr. Lisa B.

The next day, I called my old therapists from the men's group and one of them called me back later that day. I asked him what I needed to do first and he advised me to start with a lawyer and gave me three phone numbers.

I called each one and told them my case. All three told me that if I was a woman and it was a male therapist that they would take the case, but since it was the other way around that they would only make about a tenth as much as the other way. But they all encouraged me to report her anyway, to stop all the craziness from continuing. Not that it's a big deal, but I have noticed MANY double standards in our culture. This country is a mixed-up place, of confused, scared, backward people with a system that not only preys on them, but also has invested billions of dollars in advertising and propaganda to keep people dumb and compliant. We are told we live in a democracy of freedom with checks and balances but the whole thing's fixed folks, I hate to spill the beans and ruin your day. There ain't no money in the banks, the entire business system is based on fraud, the laws aren't real or enforced and there ain't no Easter Bunny, either!

Anyway, I called the Southern California Psychology Board and reported Lisa. They sent a social worker to my apartment and I told her the whole story. She was very calm and patient and wrote the whole thing down in her notebook. I showed her about 80 pages of emails of Lisa confessing to the entire thing and totally busting herself, time and time again. I had photos of us performing and tapes and flyers and a ton of witnesses from the program that saw us acting out all the time, etc. She was SO busted.

After the investigation, the social worker lady contacted Lisa. She didn't try to fight it and confessed to the whole thing. She lost her license and wasn't allowed to practice therapy in the state of California ever again.

A long time ago, Lisa told me that the reason she became a therapist in the first place was because her mother was always threatening to kill herself and her kids, too. As a result, Lisa became an overachiever and a shrink so she could fix her mother. She actually didn't like being a therapist, and she really wanted to pursue music and other creative endeavors. So, in a way, I did her a favor and got her out of a profession that she never really wanted to do in the first place.

I never heard from Lisa again, but the legend of Fuzzy Slipper lives on.