



# Hand in Hand

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## Inside This Issue

- 1 Sponsorship
- 2 Finding Hope
- 3 Outreach
- 3 Bed & Breakfast Club
- 5 RCAC 2009 Florida
- 6 Silent Auction
- 7 Final Thoughts

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Mark IRW Vicki

## RCA- Who we are

We are understanding couples with three aims;

- Improve our communications
- Expand our self-caring
- Strengthen our commitment and watch our relationships grow to fulfill our Hopes and Dreams.

We suffer from many addictions, co-addictions, some identified, some not. Many of us have been separated or near divorce. Some of us are new in our relationships and seek to build intimacy as we grow together as committed couples.

## Our Philosophy

RCA is a tool for recovery and not an end in itself. It exists to promote caring, communication and intimacy. A quite successful formula RCA is: My individual recovery plus your individual recovery plus our couple recovery equals a healthy recovering relationship.

## Steps, Sponsorship and Service all go Hand in Hand.

When we formed our face-to-face meeting, members all knew each other from other 12 step recovery programs, and together, we were feeling our way through the RCA program. Mark and I knew we needed a sponsor couple. We discovered the phone meetings via the RCA website. When we joined the phone meetings, we listened for a couple who had experience, strength and hope and who could help us work the steps. We are now on our second go-around of the steps and are renewing our step seven

guidelines. Having a sponsor couple has been rewarding for us. When we have completed a step or guideline, we send it to them through e-mail. Next, we read the step on the phone and they share their experience, strength and hope and will ask us thought provoking questions. After our sponsorship phone meetings, we felt peaceful. Noticing our progress through working steps with our sponsor couple has brought joy to our coupleship. We've seen the RCA promises fulfilled.

Service work is crucial to our recovery. We sponsor one couple via phone and it is amazing the heartfelt connections we feel, and we've never met them. Being a sponsor couple continues to center our coupleship.

We've learned "In order to keep it, you have to give it away." Witnessing our sponsee couple work the steps has brought abundant gifts to us. As a fellowship of equals, we simply share our experience, strength and hope. Sharing our issues with our sponsee couple has diminished our shame and reduced fears. At the same time, sharing our joys has multiplied.

Serving on the sponsorship committee is boosting our recovery. This committee is doing so many wonderful things for the growth of RCA. For us, the rewards of working with couples across the USA have been plentiful. We are gaining ideas on ways sponsors work with couples. For example, some sponsor couples ask sponsees to write commitment letters stating why each partner is in the relationship as well as agreements concerning the commitment to being sponsored. We may implement these wonderful new ideas as we continue to sponsor.

Without RCA, we would not be in a committed partnership. Thanks to our Higher Power, working the steps, sponsorship and service because for us, all three go Hand-in-Hand for love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams!!!

*Deborah irw Mark*

*Being in the Solution RCA meeting*

*Richmond, VA*

### **Lost and Found**

When I started RCA a little over 2 years ago, it was my first experience in a 12 step program of any kind. I had no "program of my own". I was one of those people who came to RCA desperate to "save (fix) my marriage". This, of course, meant to "fix" my partner. He was new in a program of his own, and he came to RCA because "he wanted for me to have what he had found in his program." We both came desperate for guidance because we had lost our way.

What we found was HOPE. We found caring couples who had been there, and were willing to share their experience, strength, and hope, and they helped us to believe that we were not alone. Isolation had become our prison. We did not trust each other, and certainly

trusted no one else. I know I did not even trust myself. We came broken. We were oblivious to how powerless we were about our relationship. In the rooms of RCA we found a way to admit our powerlessness, and to find those things we did have the power and ability to change. We saw other people struggling with the same issues we had. We saw how other couples dealt with them, what worked for them, what did not. We learned that we had choices in how we could deal with our issues. We learned the tools of RCA. We saw them practiced on a weekly basis, not always perfectly, but with a new hope. We saw that it was okay to make mistakes, and that those mistakes did not mean we were doomed forever.

Through our weekly face to face meetings and an occasional phone meeting, we learned a new way to communicate with each other. We learned to accept things in our marriage as they were. That in accepting each other and our marriage as it was, we could then move on to a safe discussion on how to better our relationship and create that healthy coupleship we so desired.

Our commitment to each other and to our marriage was the first place we focused. We then committed ourselves to working on a healthier relationship with good boundaries. We learned to care for each other again. We learned to give to each other of ourselves without giving ourselves away completely. We learned to communicate who we really were in a safe and healthy way, and to listen and respect our partner and what they had to say without trying to change them.

Face to Face meetings, phone calls with other members, our Sponsor couple, phone meetings, literature, and the annual conventions we have attended for the past two years are all fantastic tools we have used to "change the things we can." They have been our lifeline, our map. We have truly found our way - the RCA way. And I am truly grateful for each and every one of you for being here so there is an RCA for me to be a part of.

Keep coming Back!

*Vicki In Loving Recovery with Mark*

### **RCA Experience in "Working With Others"**

Thanks to the Outreach Committee's recent invitation to all Group Contact Couples, additional first-time

participants joined the Sponsorship Committee's June teleconference. Here's some sharing from the June call.

"We ask our new sponsee couple to read the draft Blue Book section on Sponsorship before we begin working together. The section is very instructive about what RCA sponsors are, and are not."

"What we share with our sponsees is suggested. We share about what works for us, but also...what works for us may not work for them."

"We ask... 'What would you like us to help you with?' Most are working the Steps, and they tell us it's helpful (if) we share our own Steps with them... This opens up...commitment and trust."

"... sometimes it appears that...we have taken sides with one of the...partners. This is not intentional, but it's something to be mindful of."

"The word 'temporary' is very helpful. It takes off the pressure."

"We hand out a 'Welcome!' packet to newcomers with a copy of the April (2008) Hand in Hand's beautiful article on Sponsorship, and a list of the three weekly phone meetings. We tell couples that with the phone meetings they can get support more than once a week."

"Anybody new to RCA and without a face-to-face meeting ought to get onto one of the telephone meetings...listen to other people with their experience, strength, and hope, and their challenges...(and) ask for help."

"A way to expand the [Sponsorship] conversation is for each of us to talk with our sponsees, and find out what's working and not working for them."

One couple shared that for them the qualifications for sponsorship are at least a year in RCA, plus actively working the RCA steps with their own sponsor couple. Another couple's experience and perspective are that co-sponsorship can be good, "Each couple just getting used to talking to another couple about one's issues." A third couple said:

"We're the only group in [our city], maybe in [our entire state]. And in our meeting there are only five committed couples. So no criteria were set at the beginning... We...asked other couples in our group if they would like us to sponsor them, and they said yes. We've had moderate success... With so new and small a group, I don't know that we can have any stringent

guidelines."

Willing to share your experience in "Working With Others?" Thinking of joining the next call? Drop a line to [rca\\_couple@yahoo.com](mailto:rca_couple@yahoo.com) and you'll get a big welcome to the next call. Share your RCA experience; it's great for your coupleship.

## **Bed and Breakfast Club**

The 7th tradition Bed and Breakfast Club gives RCA couples an opportunity to connect with other RCA couples. Instead of spending money on a hotel, traveling couples stay with members of the RCA fellowship, and a recommended donation of \$20 to \$30 per night goes to WSO. This is a way to support RCA through our own contributions!

"...queen size bed, private bath, large deck, tennis courts, and a pool!"

404-849-2189 - Tami and Matt in Roswell (suburb of Atlanta), GA

"...hot tub with a view of the Cascade Mountains, dog-friendly"

(541) 343-4920 - Gladys IRW Jade, Eugene, Oregon"

"...condominium with private bedroom and bath suite on San Francisco Bay"

(510) 235-6111 - Elise and David near San Francisco"

"...own room in their home... surrounded by great books, experience, strength, and hope"

(925) 274-1186 - Bob and Betsy from San Francisco"

"...their Rockville home or their Delaware condo (a mile from Bethany Beach)"

(301) 424-4594 - Kate and Dan Rockville, Maryland (20 miles from DC)"

"...Winnipeg...ice fishing in the winter to hot summers"

(204) 668-1515 - Gerrie committed to Randy, Randy committed to Gerrie"

If you want to add your name to the RCA Bed & Breakfast Club send a finished description to the editor Elise –

[marie-elise@earthlink.net](mailto:marie-elise@earthlink.net)



## Riding the Wave of Recovery

2009 RCA Convention, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

### Y'all Come On Down

Talk about Southern hospitality! We can hardly wait for your visit. You are going to come to the 2009 RCA Convention, aren't you?

If you want to go to the next level of coupleship healing, then ***Riding the Wave of Recovery***, the 2009 RCA Convention in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, may be just the ticket. Our theme, *Let the Sunshine In, Learning to Play and Have Fun Together*, says it all. So come on down and put some JOY into your life, learn new and valuable things about healthy relationship and meet some of the most fantastic couples on the same journey.

We'll have wonderful breakout sessions that address the most important issues couples face, interesting and moving keynote speakers, healthy-delicious food, lots of laughter and lots of FUN.

It will be during one of the most spectacular times of year in Florida -- October 16, 17 and 18. The weather will still be good for sunning by the oversized outdoor heated pool with Jacuzzi, but the nights will be pleasantly cool.

You'll stay at the Sheraton Fort Lauderdale Airport Hotel, a convenient suburban site only 1.5 miles from the user friendly Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport, 4 miles from the beautiful Atlantic beaches, and 7 miles from downtown Fort Lauderdale. You'll get a really special room rate for the convention ... only \$119 per night double. That includes shuttle service from and to the airport. The rooms are newly renovated and richly decorated with "Sweet Sleeper" beds, remote-control color televisions, hair dryers, coffee makers, alarm clocks, irons/ironing boards and hi-speed internet access capability.

If you like tennis, there are two outdoor, lighted courts and complimentary equipment. Or perhaps you're lost without a fitness center. Never fear, you'll have access to one at the hotel. How about golf? At least three golf clubs are just a few minutes away.

The earlier you register, the less it costs so ***do it today***. **You may save as much as \$25.00 per person by registering now. A Food Package being offered too, at a very reasonable price to you.** Go to [www.recovering-couples.org](http://www.recovering-couples.org) and click on "2. 2009 Florida Convention Registration Form" to download the form. To book your room, go to [www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/RCA2009](http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/RCA2009) or call (954) 920-3500.

If you have questions about the convention, you may e-mail them to [FloridaConvention@recovering-couples.org](mailto:FloridaConvention@recovering-couples.org) or if you'd like to talk to a real person, call (954) 432-8167.

See y'all in October 2009, y' hear!



## Riding the Wave of Recovery

2009 RCA Convention, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

### Learning to Play and Have Fun Together

What a great theme for a convention! Now how do we fit that theme into our annual fundraising benefit for the WSO Office, the Silent Auction?

We hope to keep the Fun in the Sun theme going by adding items to this year's Silent Auction that promote couple fun! Think about how you like to have fun as a couple. Now how can you share that experience with other couples? Do you have a timeshare in a fun place? Can you spare a few days and donate them to the Silent Auction? How about a "movie package" at a national theatre chain? Your favorite comedy on DVD? A game that makes you laugh, a round of golf or a day at a spa. How about tickets to the circus?

The ideas are endless. Let's put on our thinking caps, look into our hearts, and come up with some fabulously different auction items for this year's Convention Silent Auction. The proceeds are all sent to help run the RCA-WSO office.

Contact Mark & Vicki at [SilentAuction@recovering-couples.org](mailto:SilentAuction@recovering-couples.org) with your donations and ideas. *Please put silent auction in the subject line.*

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## 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition

As we clear up the loose ends of 2008 and as we think of the many things we are grateful for, let us remember the RCA Program. Think about where we were before RCA and where our coupleship is now. Think about the tools we have been given for our journey to a healthier coupleship. Now think of the couples that have yet to discover the Joy and Serenity we are sharing with our partners and the fellowships we belong to. Whether you participate in a face to face meeting, phone meeting, or are working the program with just your sponsors; remember how you found us.

Now imagine if there was no World Service Office, no Website, and no literature. In order for these things to exist, there must be funds to support them. As a 12 step organization we rely solely on the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition. We, you and I, are the full support of RCA. Please remember the WSO as you prepare for the Holidays and the end of the tax year. Speak at your meetings and speak to your partners. Remember to give back what you have received. Consider a 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition donation today.

Please mail donations to P.O. Box 11029, Oakland, CA 94611... make your check payable to RCA.

**Tradition Seven. Every RCA group should be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**

*Being self-supporting is the RCA source of spiritual strength and self-respect.*

*This Tradition places the financial responsibility for supporting our group on our own shoulders.*

### SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

**The 2009 RCAC will be in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.**

The 2010 RCAC will be in the mid continent. Maybe your RCA group wants to bid on 2010 or 2011!

Do you **want to be a sponsor couple** to a struggling RCA group and phone into their meeting and serve as speaker couple?

Email Betsy [betsyf2720@earthlink.net](mailto:betsyf2720@earthlink.net) or preferably phone (925) 274-1186

### 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition 7/7/2008-9/30/2008

7th Tradition - Other	50.00
Anselmi	50.00
Armstrong	100.00
Austin Texas Group - 83060	20.00
In Harmony Group	25.00
In Harmony Group	25.00
Chattanooga RCA	40.00
Fort Worth, Texas RCA	150.00
Harrison	153.00
Jamestown, CA - 45015	80.76
Jewell	35.26
Koch	100.00
LA-Sun CLARE- 45045	10.00
Linda Liegel	50.00
Los Altos CA - RCA	700.00
Minneapolis, MN - 63015	2.00
Oakland, CA Earlybird	215.00
Philadelphia Friday Night	28.60
RCA - Rockford ILL	40.00
RCA - Walnut Creek Friday Night	500.00
RCA Joint Venture Group	161.85
RCA Tyler TX - 75701	100.00
RCA-Joint Venture	100.00
RCA-Joint Venture - James Town	20.61
RCA-Keizer OR 77012	50.00
San Diego - RCA	406.00
San Diego - RCA	14.00
Santa Cruz, CA - 45100	150.00
Saturday Mesa Group - 43005	13.00
Seattle, WA Sunday Group #87010	317.24
Shattuck	20.00
Sherman Oaks - RCA	80.00
Sherman Oaks - RCA	115.75
Steinhauer	2.40
Stoverink	50.00
Stoverink	50.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,025.47</b>

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