

HAND IN HAND

JANUARY ISSUE 2018



OUR WEBSITE : www.recovering-couples.org
TO EMAIL RCA : info@recovering-couples.org

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My Partner Does Not Deliberately Hurt Me

The greatest gift I received from doing Steps 8 & 9 was the understanding that my husband does not deliberately hurt me. Now that I have realised this, it seems incredible I believed it for so long. The fact I believed it for so long tells me how cunning, baffling and powerful the thinking part of my disease is. My thinking is still not always right. Sometimes, it is really wrong. And my thinking can make me miserable.



Previously when we argued, I would hurt and get hurt. I didn't know how to do it any other way. Neither did my husband. As we recognised and acknowledged the patterns of dysfunction we brought to our coupleship from childhood, we began to grow in compassion for ourselves and each other. The expression that reminded us to go easy on each other (and this infant coupleship we were creating) was "We didn't stand a chance". Given who we are and the things we learned in childhood, how could we do any better?

Thankfully, though we couldn't do any better, our Higher Power could! Could and would if asked. We started asking for help. We got it. We always get it when we ask. God wants to give me as much patience as I need to be more loving. He wants to give me as much courage as I need to be more loving.

On a 12-Step retreat I picked up this tip: when I hold you responsible for the wound in my memory, I'm in trouble! This helped a lot. I began to attribute part of my hurt in the moment to past events. This really helped right size my anger, mistrust, and blame.

Today I don't live in pain caused by my own wrong thinking. I know my husband does not deliberately hurt me and it has made a real difference.

By Unknown Author

A Key to Successful Sponsoring

"We're not ready to sponsor another couple!", have you, as a couple, ever thought that?

We've found that what got us ready to sponsor other couples was being willing. Willing to do what? Willing to be a faithful, dedicated sponsee couple first!

Sponsoring

When we started working our Steps with a sponsor couple, meeting once a week, every week, doing the Step work that the book assigns, we made progress. Was it easy? Some of it was. Was it enjoyable? Some of it was. Was it work? Yes. That's why it is called STEP WORK.

We accomplished working through all 12 Steps using the *Step Up To Love* book in less than six months. How did it help us? We learned a lot about ourselves and our relationship. We discovered skills to improve our coupleship. We realized it was safe to trust another couple. They devoted their time to serve us and were willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with us. Our sponsors said it helped them grow in their own relationship. They became our friends.

Since that time, we have sponsored many other couples using the *Step Up To Love* book, as well as using the *Fourth Edition of our Basic Text*. They both work as guides to keep the sponsoring couple as well as the sponsored couple on task.

Sometimes in a new group there may only be one couple that has gone through the Steps previously with a sponsoring couple. That's fine -- they can sponsor the second couple. As that second couple moves through their Steps, they learn how to help others do the same. Soon there are two couples that can hold out the hand of fellowship and sponsorship.

With today's technology, long distance sponsoring is possible and effective. We have sponsored several couples using Zoom or Skype. We meet once a week at an agreed upon time just like we would if it was in person. Phone sponsoring also works well. It just takes a book on both ends, and a commitment from all to do the work.

Raising our hands as a couple to sponsor another couple serves them and has been a priceless gift to ourselves!

by Vicki irw Dick

Sharing my Experience, Strength & Hope

The Literature Committee is currently collecting submissions for the Daily Reader.

This book will be written by the RCA fellowship and is simply 365 pages of Experience, Strength, and Hope. Just like a meeting, there is no right way to share beyond using the Safety Guidelines. Please consider jotting down something to help us get closer to our goal. Pick a topic, like one of the reflections, and "share" on it. You can speak into your phone to record, then type it out. Or record yourself speaking at a meeting and then type it out. Do you journal, can you share something regarding your experience in RCA? What did you do to harm your relationship today? Will you share what you learned from that? How do you rejoice in your partner as you practice Commitment, Communication, and Caring?

I find that when I share in a meeting, I can think of many things I meant to say after I passed. That is what I write about. I sometimes read something in another inspirational book, and I share about my feeling on that with my partner. I have used those topics to write about. Sometimes I am stuck and cannot work something out, but when I write it down it seems to flow easier, so I use that pain to write also.

There are great inspirational daily-reader books for individual programs, but not much that speaks to couple recovery. We want to change that.

Don't be shy! This is a great way to practice the 12th Step!

Vicki in loving recovery with Mark

Send submissions to:
dailyreader@recovering-couples.org

The Tool of Service

My husband and I are a balanced team -- I love to serve and he doesn't like to serve -- so we both balance each other out. LOL! I tend to want to volunteer, sometimes too often or too much as might be healthy and helpful to do. My husband tends to not want to volunteer, and sometimes not as much as he agrees might be healthy and helpful to do.

So we have made an agreement to always talk about the "possibility of service" before volunteering. We go over the calendar together at a time that is convenient for both of us, and we make sure we aren't in a HALT state: Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired.



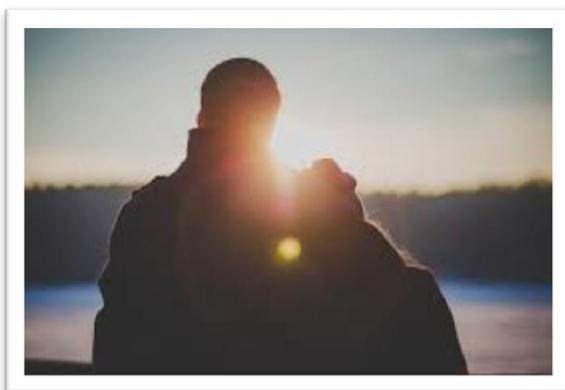
This ensures that we can sanely discuss the pros and the cons of making these scheduling decisions. It helps us be able to see the benefits, as well as the cautions about service. Thus, we are as loving to ourselves as we are hoping to be to whomever we may be thinking about serving.

Over our years in RCA we have learned that this will make service more of a pleasure. We are being considerate of one another and being wise in how we schedule our days and weeks. This helps eliminate surprises and cuts down potential resentments. It results in a kinder and more considerate coupleship example in whatever area we are serving.

by Vicki irw Dick

RCA Email Addresses

7thtradition@recovering-couples.org	Info On 7th Tradition
articles@recovering-couples.org	Hand In Hand Submissions
chair@recovering-couples.org	Board of Trustees, Chair
dailyreader@recovering-couples.org	Daily Reader Submissions
executive-committee@recovering-couples.org	Email The Executive Committee
info@recovering-couples.org	General Info Email
meetings@recovering-couples.org	Meeting Info
outreach-committee@recovering-couples.org	Group Outreach
phone-meetings@recovering-couples.org	Phone Meeting General Info
retreat-registry@recovering-couples.org	Retreat/Event Registrations
secretary@recovering-couples.org	Board of Trustees, Secretary
stepstudyfacilitators@recovering-couples.org	Monthly Stepstudy Info
technology@recovering-couples.org	Technology / Webteam Info
conceptsandtraditions-committee@recovering-couples.org	Former Ethics Committee
translations@recovering-couples.org	Translations Committee
treasurer@recovering-couples.org	Board of Trustees, Treasurer
vicechair@recovering-couples.org	Board of Trustees, Vicechair
web-team@recovering-couples.org	Web-Team Contact
wso-convention-committee@recovering-couples.org	Wso Convention Committee
wso-zoom@recovering-couples.org	Wso Zoom Reservations



To Grow Up

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for complete approval, utter security and perfect romance – urges quite appropriate to age seventeen – prove to be an impossible way of life at forty seven or fifty seven.

... We learn that the full satisfaction of these demands cannot be the sole end and aim of our lives. We cannot place the cart before the horse, or we shall be pulled backward into disillusionment. But when we are willing to place spiritual growth first – then and only then do we have a real chance to grow in healthy awareness and mature love.

From 'As Bill Sees It'

7th Tradition Update

Meeting	Amount
Ithaca NY group	\$100
Bloomington group	\$50
Santa Clarita group	\$200
Charlottesville zoom group	\$25
Edmonton Friday night group	\$239
Unknown group	\$30
Unknown group	\$20
Chicago Friday night Swedish covenant group	\$35
Green Valley group	\$50
Cleveland West group	\$60
Lakeshore group	\$100
Thousand Oaks group	\$250
Tucson group A	\$175
Tucson group B	\$96
Yucaipa group	\$150
Together in hope group, Memphis	\$200
Saturday night group	\$50
Walnut Creek Friday night group	\$400
Boulder Tuesday group	\$480
NC Triad group	\$150
El Segundo Saturday group	\$865
Individual contributions	\$1,424
Total	\$5,149

Contributions received October –
December 2017

thank you!

RCA needs YOU!



Technology and Website Committee

Why not offer some of your time? You do not need to be a rocket scientist! We need people who know Twitter, Facebook, and other social media that can help us get the word out about RCA.

We are also looking for people who are willing to review the website layout and content.

Please drop us a line at:

web-team@recovering-couples.org

Hand In Hand

We want to make the Hand In Hand a relevant publication in which we can share our experience, strength and hope with the wider RCA community. We are always looking for RCA couples or individual members to help with writing articles and editing.

Please submit articles by 2nd April 2018 to
articles@recovering-couples.org

Reflections

Change

As autumn unfurls, leaves turn rusty and tan, old gives way to the new. Change is never comfortable, is it? It is accompanied by fear, anxiety, and resistance. But it is all that is constant in the course of life. As we deal with the leafs of life and de-clutter some fallen issues. It is important to set our hearts free from fear of them which stifles our existence and inhibits our growth.

Have you ever wondered what your biggest fear is in life? What do you do to deal with it? The best way to overcome it is to inculcate or inspire faith and live in hope. In times of affliction, keep calm and endure with patience. When you can't see the road ahead, pray with all your heart and share with a friend. Pray to surrender and not to grab or want answers feverishly. Friends bring a way forward. - From Greetings

RCA TOOL TIME: Building healthy Coupleships by Vicki IRW Dick

- Hammer: **12 STEPS** - nail down HOW we can recover, one step at a time
- Extension Cord: **PRAYER** - Plug in daily!
- Paintbrush: **SPONSOR** Couple - helps paint the true picture and appreciates us as a work of art
- Screwdriver: **12 TRADITIONS** - keeps relationships from screwing up
- Crescent Wrench: **PHONECALLS TO PROGRAM FRIENDS/SPONSOR COUPLE** - turns our nutty thinking around
- Utility knife: **MEETINGS** - keeps us on the cutting edge of truth & reality
- Tape Measure: **SLOGANS** - "Measure twice, Cut once"; 1 day at a time
- Adaptor: **MEDITATION** - Slow down and pause to Listen to Higher Power
- Putty Knife: **JOURNALING** - putting thoughts and feelings on paper helps face our reality and fill in the holes of our thinking
- Sand paper: **GRATITUDE** - smooths out rough spots in our relationship
- Pliers: **SERVICE** - Apply Action to help other couples
- Level: **BALANCE** - Pause, Breathe
- Flashlight: **READING LITERATURE** - helps us see the light which helps us grow

When we remember to put on our tool belts and diligently use the tools daily, we can build a strong and sturdy quality relationship

Series on Tools of Recovery

Attending and sharing at meetings



We attend RCA meetings to learn how the program works and to share our experience, strength, and hope with other couples. In meetings, we learn that our struggles and troubles are not unique and we gain hope and assurance that our own coupleship can recover and grow. Meetings often bring partners closer and encourage communication. Being honest and vulnerable in front of our partner is frightening but worth it. Many of us believe that our coupleships recover in direct proportion to our willingness to share at meetings.

I began attending RCA meetings with my husband at the recommendation of our therapist and my sponsor in another program. Initially, I didn't find them comfortable - in my defensiveness I disliked sharing in front of my husband, the respect that I felt between other couples as they shared (so far from where I was at that point!) and the fact that couples hugged one another after the meeting

However, as we continued to attend, I learned to listen to my husband's shares and to hear him rather than interrupting as I did at home. I heard others' experiences that were similar to ours and I heard stories of how they had progressed to better places. Nuggets of wisdom struck chords with me and guided me as we worked out our path through the Steps and some thorny issues along the road. I learned to listen better at home and began to reach out to RCA fellows from our home group when things got tough.

These days my palms don't sweat and my heart doesn't race when I share in RCA meetings. I am no longer afraid to share in front of my husband and I feel warmth for the other couples whose path I have witnessed over the last few years. They have heard my pain and dysfunction yet welcomed me back and listened to me week after week as we worked things out. Most of the time I even enjoy the long hug with my husband after the meeting - although there are still weeks when we have disagreed and I find that contact uncomfortable. Progress not perfection!

Meetings now feel like a treat. This dedicated time to focus on the coupleship that I value amid our busy lives brings me inspiration and warmth.

Keep coming back.

Toni IRW Andy