

## The Twelve Steps of RCA - Step 3

*We made a decision to turn our wills and our life together over to the care of God as we understood God.*

Together two people in a committed relationship form a coupleship, a oneness, a distinct and separate entity. This coupleship has a life of its own and needs to be nurtured. Couple recovery depends on this nurturance. Each partner needs individual recovery such as meetings, sponsorship, support groups, spirituality, recreation, vocation, and individual interests. The coupleship needs these same elements for couple recovery.

Trust is a major issue for most couples, since almost all couples have had trust violated in the past. Just as Step Two focused on what we decided to trust together, Step Three focuses on how we decide to turn our coupleship over to our Higher Power.

Letting go of outcomes is especially helpful. Many of us feel compelled to control events, believing that our happiness depends on resolutions favorable to us, only to find disappointment when the happiness we expect is only temporary or nonexistent. In spiritually centered coupleships, we simply do our best, while leaving the outcome to our Higher Power.

Some couples find “Higher Power Boxes” helpful to visualize relinquishing control. Couples write their relationship problems down and place them in the box, symbolically turning them over to their Higher Power. Similarly, some couples make a ceremony of burning their problems or having the tide wash them away.

The practice of meditation and prayer, especially the Serenity Prayer, is the spiritual bulwark of most couples. Focusing on insight, courage, willingness, and acceptance seems to be the key to letting go.

Becoming more integrated in an RCA group is a vital part of any Third Step. Sharing our fears and stories at the group and sponsor level is an emotional letting go. It also allows us to relate to others, breaking our sense of isolation and uniqueness. Participation in a meeting can lead to a change in perspective and a return to sanity. “Letting go” also means “not going alone.” Many couples go on a “spiritual quest” as part of their Third Step. Spiritual quests vary widely, but could include the following:

- Starting each day with thanksgiving
- Reading spiritually significant literature together
- Meditating
- Going to a house of worship or other spiritually significant place
- Going to recovery groups
- Praying
- Going on a spiritual retreat together

These quests could take days, months, or even years. We hope that your own spiritual outlook as a couple will be deepened. We encourage you to write down a quest agreement. This could be in longhand or printed suitable for framing and witnessed by friends or your sponsors. This is a truly warm, supportive, and validating experience for all involved. Additionally, we suggest that you chair an RCA Step meeting, and share your experience, strength, and hope with other couples.

Ultimately, Step Three involves turning our relationship over. Many of us find it important to do something significant, even formal, to celebrate our spiritual renewal, such as a rededication of couple

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vows in the presence of friends. This may occur anywhere: in a place of worship, at an informal gathering such as a picnic, or at home. We invite you to be creative and have a personally memorable event celebrating your increasing commitment to each other and to the relationship.

We recognize that we are on a spiritual path together. Placing our relationship in our Higher Power's hands would mean the end of power struggles and seeking to control. We make a decision. We surrender. This is the spiritual principle upon which Step Three rests.

1. **Trust is a major issue for most couples**, as our experience of trust was violated (1) in our families of origin, (2) in previous relationships, and perhaps (3) within our own coupleships. First, individually recall at least one instance in the past where trust was violated in each of those three different areas. Second, form the beginning of an ongoing list titled of what we have decided to trust together.

Where was trust violated in our families of origin?

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Where was trust violated in previous Relationships?

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Where was trust violated within our own coupleship?

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What have we decided to trust together?

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2. **Many couples go on a spiritual quest as part of their Third Step.** Answer these questions:

A. What things have we done in the past as part of our spiritual quest?

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B. What are we doing now as part of our spiritual quest?

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C. What might we do in the future as part of our spiritual quest?

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3. Write a first draft of our "statement of faith."

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4. **We recognize that we are on a spiritual path together.** Placing our relationship in our Higher Power's hands would mean the end of power struggles and seeking to control. We make a decision. We surrender. This is the spiritual principle upon which Step Three rests. Now, write a first draft of "Our Spiritual Quest Agreement."

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5. Read over your answers to questions 11 and 12 in Step 2. Identify those statements that you both agree about and list them below:

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6. In what ways has your understanding of a Higher Power changed since coming into recovery?

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7. What are some ways we can turn our lives over to the care of God as we now understand God?

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### **3<sup>rd</sup> Step Prayer**

*God, we offer ourselves to Thee -  
to build with us and to do with us as Thou wilt.*

*Relieve us of the bondage of self that we may better do Thy Will.*

*Take away our difficulties,  
that victory over them may bear witness to those we would help  
of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life.*

*May we do Thy Will Always!*

### **Affirmation**

*We let go of expectations and attachment to perceived outcomes.  
We place our future in the hands of our Higher Power.*