

## **How RCA Works—Part I**

Adapted from the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* © 1939, 1955, A.A. World Services, Inc.

Rarely have we seen a couple fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands mutual and rigorous honesty. There are those, too, who cannot or will not make a commitment to their partner. There are those who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas, and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with addictions—cunning, baffling, powerful. We also deal with all those memories of past hurts, misbehavior, and vows violated. Without help our anger, hurt, and mistrust are too great for us. But there is one who has all power; that one is God. May you find God now.

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked God's protection and care with complete abandon. Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery.

## **The Twelve Steps of RCA**

1. We admitted we were powerless over our relationship— that our lives together had become unmanageable.

2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to commitment and intimacy.

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

4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of our relationship together as a couple.

5. We admitted to God, to each other, and to another couple the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character, communication, and caring.

7. We humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it to our partner and to others we had harmed.

11. We sought through our common prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other couples, and to practice these principles in all aspects of our lives, our relationship, and our families.

## **How RCA Works—Part II**

Many of us exclaimed, “What an order! We can’t go through with it. Our love is lost, our vows forever violated, our communication destroyed, our families broken beyond repair.”

Do not be discouraged. No couple among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles.

We are not saints, our love is not perfect, our energy not unbounded, nor our relationships ideal. There is no such thing as the ultimately caring and nurturing partner or perfect intimacy. The point is that we are willing to grow together along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. In our spirituality we claim the goal of greater caring, communication, and intimacy.

Our understanding of our addictions, dysfunctions, and our personal histories before and after recovery make clear three pertinent ideas:

1. That our relationship had become unmanageable. That despite our best efforts we were headed for separation and/or divorce.
2. That probably no human power could have restored us to commitment and intimacy.
3. That God could and would if God were sought.