

Monday, February 19, 2007

Subject: 4th ed revisions - suggested

Carl and JoAnn:

Attached are the suggested revisions for the two Hawaii groups:

1. Saturday Hilo meeting
2. Tuesday Puna meeting.

Hope these are of help. The groups have one more revision session to send to you, which should come soon. They regret that they did not have time to go through the whole thing by Feb. 28.

Best,

Andy in recovery with Steve in Hawaii

***Attaching the following:***

1. Tuesday RCA's 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Revisions – Step One Revisions .....page 1
2. Tuesday RCA's 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Revisions – Forward Revisions.....page 3
3. Hawaii RCA, Sat night revisions.....page 4

Tuesday RCA's 4<sup>th</sup> ed. revisions.

## **Step One Revisions**

General: We like the present tense expressed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. better than the 2006 draft 4<sup>th</sup> ed past tense.

**Part 1:** this is a revision of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, 1996 version:

We all have family-of-origin issues and a history of relationships. We may not have gotten what we needed emotionally, physically, mentally or spiritually ~~when we were growing up.~~ **We may have experienced** abuse (physical, sexual, spiritual, emotional), abandonment, or deprivation. We all bring “baggage” to the coupleship. The steps teach us how to look at our baggage and how to reverse the process of blame.

**Part 2:** We prefer the present tense of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1996 version.

**Part 3:** this is a revision of **the 4<sup>th</sup> ed 2006** draft version:

Occasionally some couples ~~might not have been far enough along in their individual recoveries, or not in recovery at all, to be able to answer the following questions, or they might have gotten~~

into fights or into dysfunctions simply by having issues raised. ~~If In this were the case,~~ we encouraged Step work be done only in the presence of sponsoring couples.

**Part 4:** this is a revision of the 4<sup>th</sup> ed 2006 draft version:

~~Couples come into RCA at different stages. We also recognized that some couples came to our meetings having met after both partners had been in individual recoveries for various periods of time. They might not have had long histories together of coupleship dysfunction or other dysfunction. In those cases, Step One involveds understanding old dysfunctional patterns. With other partners. It also involveds understanding family-of-origin issues, personality traits and other individual issues that might have affected their-our current coupleships.~~

**Part 5:** this is a revision of the 4<sup>th</sup> ed 2006 draft version:

Writing ~~was~~ **is** important for clarity and thoroughness. ~~It was suggested we:~~ **We suggest:**

1. Take one pencil and one piece of paper and begin the process together. RCA is about the “we”-ness and “us”-ness of our relationship. In RCA, we open ourselves up to a new way of thinking and living in coupleship.
2. Make couple decisions: who will hold the pencil and do the writing? Are you able to share, negotiate or compromise? Is there a power struggle? And, are you ready to take the First Step?
3. Read aloud the “Safety Guidelines.”
4. Divide the paper in half with a vertical line down the middle.
5. Make lists of the coupleship issues over which we feel powerless.
6. Alternately, one partner write and the other dictates, or the partners may write their own parts.

**Part 6:** this is a revision of the 4<sup>th</sup> ed 2006 draft version:

We ~~were~~ **are** ~~then~~ ready to answer the following questions:

1. What dysfunctional roles ~~had we brought~~ **do we bring** from our families of origin?
2. What ~~had~~ **have** our family-of-origin models taught us about relationships?
3. What ~~were~~ **are** our individual experiences of abuse, and how ~~had~~ **do** ~~those-they~~ affected our ability to ~~be~~ related, to be intimate, and to be sexual?

4. How ~~had our~~ **do any** individual addictions **and/or dysfunctions** affected our coupleships?
5. **What are recurring issues we never seem to resolve?** ~~What were the unmanageable issues we never seemed to resolve~~ (e.g., how we spent money, how we spent our time together, parenting ~~ed the kids,~~ **how we** divided the household duties, where/how we celebrated holidays, etc.)?
6. How ~~had~~ **do** these issues ~~brought~~ **bring** us to anger and what ~~were~~ **are** our patterns of expressing anger?
7. How had we felt hopeless about our coupleships?
8. ~~In order~~ To save our coupleships, what measures had we tried that hadn't seemed to work?
9. How had we fought unfairly?

Having surrendered thus far, we were ready to take Step Two.

Tuesday RCA's 4<sup>th</sup> ed. revisions.

## Forward

We are members of Recovering Couples Anonymous (RCA). Many of us have ~~addiction~~ **experienced** problems for which we sought Twelve Step Recovery Programs. As we ~~obtained sobriety~~ **recovered in our individual programs,** we found we could not relate to our partners in our old ways. Many of us separated and many of us came close to permanent separation or divorce.

Unwilling to abandon a coupleship we ~~had~~ valued, we ~~sought~~ **seek** ways to heal our coupleship. Through the program of RCA we ~~were able to have a~~ **are** changing for the better in our coupleship to levels never obtained before. **We are learning** new ways of relating and solving life problems. ~~Were learned.~~ **We are finding** increased levels of intimacy. ~~Were found.~~ **We were freed** **are finding freedom** from the old ways of relating and fighting, ~~and~~ **which** leads to a relationship of a type we never knew existed.

We feel the need, and have the obligation, to share this program with others. This book contains guides many of us have followed in recovery. We wish to publicize these guides to give hope to others and suggestions how they might help their coupleships also.

We wish to emphasize this book is not a cookbook nor a self-help book. Most of us ~~have been~~ **are being** helped by working with others. We ~~worked~~ the steps, ideally with a sponsor couple, or at least in a knowledgeable supportive system, we ~~attended~~ RCA meetings, and we ~~passed on~~ what we ~~had~~ learned to others by sharing, service work, or being sponsors ourselves.

We discourage trying to work this program alone. We think of this book as a guide book, a general description of how we improved our coupleships. Couple recovery was found after work along this path. We hope you find recovery for your coupleship also.

## **Hawaii RCA, Sat night revisions**

Where do we define Higher Power?

Where do we introduce RCA as a “Spiritual Program”?

### Chapter I. An Invitation to Healing

#### Who We Are

**We are a spiritual but not religious program.** We are couples committed to restoring healthy communication, caring, and greater intimacy to our coupleships. We suffer from many problems: some identified and some not, some treated and some not. We also come from different levels of brokenness. Many of us have been separated or near divorce. Some of us are new in our coupleships. **We all** ~~and~~ seek to build intimacy together as couples **in RCA**. ~~We have sought healing in Recovering Couples Anonymous (RCA).~~

#### Who Comes to RCA

Paragraphs 1 through 4 are as is.

Paragraph 5 changed as follows:

“We feared that if we really let our partners know who we really are—what we had done or what we were feeling and thinking—we’d be abandoned. We either avoided our problems or felt we were individually responsible for solving the problems we had as a couple. ~~It was easier~~ **felt safer to hide (medicate)** **seemed easier to avoid** our feelings through compulsive behavior than it was to express them.”

Rest of pg 7 and top of pg 8 as is.

## Our Philosophy

Paragraph 1: we think this should be deleted **except for the first 2 sentences**. Why? Because we think the 3 legs of RCA are commitment, caring and communication. To introduce this book with this alternative definition of the 3 legs of RCA (my individual recovery, plus your individual recovery, plus our couple recovery) is confusing **and overwhelming**.

Paragraph 2: We think **the first part of** this paragraph should also be deleted. Why?

1. Because this is a “should” and is none of our business; some couples may come to RCA and find they do not belong together and be able to separate without destroying one another;

2. Because it does not define what Nar-Anons and/or Al-Anons, O-Anons, SL-Anons, etc. “Don’t Do”. The following is how we’d like to see all this worded:

RCA is a tool for recovery and not an end in itself. It exists to promote caring, communication and intimacy **in our coupleships**. ~~A quite successful formula of RCA is: my individual recovery, plus your individual recovery, plus our couple recovery equals a healthy recovering relationship. These three are all important “legs” to the serenity, stability and intimacy we each seek.~~

~~In every Twelve Step program there’s something you don’t do. In AA, you don’t drink, in OA you don’t overeat, in NA you don’t do drugs, and in RCA you don’t leave. This commitment to not leave provides a foundation on which the relationship can grow.~~

~~To put paragraph 2 in a more positive state, we suggest an alternative: In every Twelve Step program there is a goal. In AA the idea is not to drink. In OA the idea is not to overeat. In NA the idea is not to do drugs. In RCA, the one thing we need to do is to keep coming back, even when our coupleships appear hopeless. This commitment to not leave RCA provides a foundation upon which the coupleship can grow.~~

We believe that a coupleship is like an infant, needing constant nurturing and care from both partners. . . etc. for paragraphs 3 - 4 although we’d like to revisit paragraphs 3 & 4 for redundancy.

~~The next 4 paragraphs (paragraphs 3—6) on page 8 are good as is.~~

For paragraph 5:

We define healing as the ability to remain in commitment to the coupleship. ~~We believe that this healing begins when we take the First Step together.~~ **For many of us, this healing begins when we attend our first RCA meeting.** That date for many of us has become like a second anniversary, our legl and/or commitment anniversary being the first. Slip;s or relapses occur when we refuse to accept mutual responsibility for our problems, get into blaming behavior, and/or stop working the program together.

Paragraph 6, as is.

Paragraph 7, bottom of page 8:

“In the RCA Program, we are learning to face our problems as a couple. We are learning to express our true feelings—even about larger issues. We are learning to [top of page 9] deal with conflict and to fight fairly. ~~Using the tools for Fair Fighting and Conflict Resolution, we are learning to resolve conflict and to create our own Conflict Resolution Agreements.~~—[the preceding strike out should come later and should refer to Page 83, the Fair Fighting /Contract.] We are learning to trust our coupleship’s Higher Power.

Paragraph 8, top of page 9, keep the same.

#### Characteristics of Functional and Dysfunctional Couples

Keep the same and in this place.

#### RCA is a Twelve Step Program

Keep this the same and in this place.

#### RCA Membership

The only requirement for RCA membership is a desire to ~~remain~~**be** in a committed relationship.

Next 2 paragraphs [paragraphs 2 and 3 in this section] are the same.

#### Paragraph 4:

Many of us have discovered that we have expected our partners to solve our family-of-origin issues or other individual issues. We are often angry at our partners because they don’t resolve feelings that belong to us individually. Unless our individual recoveries are strong and we can take ownership of our “baggage”, couple recovery will be difficult. In many ways, ~~couple~~**RCA** Twelve Step work depends on individual Twelve Step work.

#### Paragraph 5:

This theme requires a strong commitment to the Twelve Step process. We strongly suggest that both members of the coupleship be in individual Twelve Step programs. At the bare minimum, both members should ~~believe in~~**be open** to the Twelve Step process and be willing to learn more about it as individuals and as a couple. We recognize there are times when the pain ~~of~~**in** a relationship is so great **that** it needs the immediate support of our Fellowship even if one **or both** partners is new to recovery ~~or both are~~.

#### Couple Challenges [bottom of page 11]

In RCA, we are fortunate as we realize we are no longer alone as a couple nor are our troubles unique. We have found that ~~addicted~~**most** couples fight and get into serious trouble around a number of common issues. Not all couples will have all of them, but most of us will have some. The following is just a list and is not necessarily in a particular order:

1. Sex
  2. Money
- [top of page 12]
3. Children
  4. ~~Power Issues:~~ Roles

5. Rules
6. Boundaries
7. Fear, etc.

The rest of page 12 is the same.

Page 13: paragraphs 1 & 2 of “Working the Steps Together in chapter II stay the same as is.

Paragraph 3:

The First Step is foundational. We encourage couples to use the process suggested in the First Step to get a sense of the degree of powerlessness each partner has over the relationship, both individually and as a couple. It can be ~~powerful~~ (use one of these: **beneficial, useful, therapeutic, helpful**) to look at how our family-of-origin relationships—and possibly other relationships—have influenced the way we relate to our current partners.

Paragraphs 4 – 6 stay the same.

Paragraph 7, bottom of page 13:

Many of us came into RCA because we were in pain or conflict. Many of us have found it helpful to begin working the Twelve Steps together ~~right away~~. As we focused on the Steps, we worked together for the common goal of healthy intimacy. For some couples, one obstacle to working the steps was that as we started talking honestly about our coupleships we found emotionally charged issues. As a result of this, it was difficult for one or both partners to stay with the process. As things might go worse before they get better, it is strongly advised to agree not to separate and/or divorce before a certain amount of time has actively been spent ~~six months preferably, or at least six meetings, and/or~~ working the first three Steps. Many couples found it helpful to make a simple commitment contract in which we agreed to work specific steps for a ~~limited~~ **specified** period of time.

We suggest that the Sample Contract that now appears on pg 14 be deleted, renamed “A Suggested Sample Contract,” and be put into the Appendix with other contracts and written agreements, and that this section go on as follows:

**Being a spiritual program**, many couples found it helpful to invite their Higher Powers into their Step Work processes starting with Step Two. Couples may want to invite their Higher Powers in whatever manner feels right to them. Many, most, or all successful RCA couples found that only by finding and incorporating Higher Powers in their coupleships do they receive **etc. through the top of page 15, including the Step 3 prayer.**

For the last paragraph of this section:

Following are the Steps which have lead many RCA couples to better coupleships. Step One is where we admitted we are powerless and needed help. Step Two is where we sought Higher Powers to help us do what we could not do ourselves. Step Three is where we invited our Higher Powers into our coupleships to find spiritual ways to deal with our problems. Step Four through Seven were for looking at what is and is not working in our coupleships, to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses, and to search for and implement better ways of dealing with our problems using our Higher Powers. Steps Eight and Nine were for repairing our past mistakes to give us the incredible freedom ~~they~~ **this** brought. Step Ten empowered us to reverse the process

of blame and shame, and inspired us to view our partners with gratitude and appreciation. Step Eleven allowed us to have a deeper sense of being guided and sustained as we worked together as couples. Step Twelve had us carry the message to other suffering couples—a major spiritual experience—for many of us.

### Step 1 page 15

Page 16,

3. Read aloud the “Safety Guidelines.” (See page 40.)

### Step 2 page 18

After item 9 add **9a. What positive spiritual experiences, if any, did we have?**

Change second to last paragraph in Step 2 to read as follows:

Now that both partners had images, or feelings, of what the Higher Powers of their choosing was like, we found those aspects of these Higher Powers that were common to both partners. Those shared Higher Powers were our couples Higher Powers. The partners could have separate Higher Powers, but many couples believed there should ~~have~~ be a goal of mutual Higher Powers shared by both partners. Many couples found having Higher Powers working in their coupleships began to restore sanity to ~~our~~**their** coupleships.

Rest of step 2 as is.

### Step 3. page 19

Change paragraph 2 on page 19 to read as follows:

Trust was a major issue for many of us, as our experiences of trust were violated in previous relationships/families of origin. Putting our trust in High Powers who were capable of infinite trust rather than in human beings who were fallible helped to restore trust in our lives and our coupleships. In Step Three we ~~found~~**find** what we decided to trust together and how ~~we decided to~~ turn our coupleships over to those Higher Powers.

We like res of Step 3 and all of Step 4 as is. For Step 5 on page 23, we suggest that after paragraph 2 you insert a short paragraph about setting up a meeting with a sponsor couple, making sure you have had dinner and an open-ended schedule, etc. as in the previous 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. step 5.