



Hand in Hand

Winter Edition, Feb 2008

Recovering Couples Anonymous <http://www.recovering-couples.org> <mailto:wso-rca@recovering-couples.org>

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Outside Literature Discussion

In this issue of the Hand in Hand Board members present a question from an RCA member: "Is there an RCA guideline on outside literature?" and the thoughtful discussion from the fellowship that ensued.

We know that the 12 steps and 12 traditions can guide us. It is my experience that the Traditions guide my behavior in all my relationships, including my small group (my partner and me). Here are specific traditions that we can look at to guide our groups about outside literature:

- Tradition 4 – *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or RCA as a whole.* And Tradition 4 refers to...
- Tradition 1 – *Our common welfare should come first — couple recovery depends upon RCA unity.* Reminding us that each member of RCA is a small part of the whole.
- Tradition 2 – *For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God as known in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*
- Tradition 12 *...to practice these principles (the 12 steps) in all aspects of our lives, our relationship and our families*

Please see [Outside Literature](#) page 2

7th Tradition Committee By Randy

HOW MUCH IS YOUR RCA RECOVERY, INNER PEACE, AND SERENITY WORTH?

Greetings Everyone! The New Year is upon us. It seems like 2007 just whizzed by. Gerrie and I are having a wonderful time growing up together, being in a committed relationship and working with and through our stuff with other recovering RCA couples.. We are grateful. We have never had it so good.

Please see [7th Tradition Committee continued](#) page 3

Can Your Group Be Found By Those In Need?

We need all RCA groups to check and update their contact information on the RCA website. If you have had trouble getting your email address accepted by the website, check out the amending instructions.

1. Go to the R C A: recovering-couples.org
2. Across the top of the home page look for "Couple Resources"
3. Under Couple Resources are sections...go to "Local Meetings" section
4. Now look for your meeting and check all information carefully

If your meeting information is correct, you can stop there. If your meeting information needs amending, here's how to do it:

1. Across the top of the RCA home page look for "Group Resources"
2. Under Group Resources are several sections...go to "Meeting Registry"
3. Follow the directions to amend your meeting contact info.

This information goes to our web-master, who updates it. If you have problems due to an unacceptable e-mail address, Please use any acceptable e-mail address in the section for e-mail addresses. in the comments section explain, "The form wouldn't accept my e-mail address," then add the correct one in the comments section. This will alert us to the problem and we will work it out.

Outside Literature Discussion continued

Reflecting on these traditions it is my understanding that every group in RCA has local autonomy; each local RCA group can make decisions on outside literature and can have any attitudes and actions it wants or likes. A group can decide to hang from the light fixtures when they enter the room. You are chuckling. But this is the privilege of Tradition 4. No authority can be resurrected to challenge them. For example, an RCA group might decide to have a relationship counselor not in RCA attend every meeting and offer a reading. This action to some RCA members would be seen as outside literature. But heretical as that may be to some of you reading this, no government or guideline would be enacted. The RCA group will be relied upon to get back on course.

[Outside Literature](#) continues on page

Sponsoring Couples Committee

Steve A., the World Service Office manager, gets many calls from couples in need of help and a sponsoring couple. Steve is forwarding these calls to the Sponsoring Couples Committee, a committee that is very needed. Thank you Sponsoring Couples: Bob and Betsy, Eleanor and Steve, Tony and Mel, Keren and Bob for your service.

This committee is having a phone conference on February 3rd. If you are interested please e-mail Bob F. at: rfrey@earthlink.net

Even if you read this after February 3rd and are interested in the committee, just e-mail Bob F. The only way we see ourselves is through others!

If you are ready to give back to RCA and serve as a sponsoring couple please connect with

Steve Adams, Office Manager
Recovering Couples Anonymous
World Service Office
P.O. Box 11029
Oakland, CA 94611
(510) 663 2312
wso-rca@pacbell.net
www.recovering-couples.org

YOUR SERVICE IS GREATLY APPRECIATED

7th Tradition Committee continued

There is so much to be grateful for. For the first time in RCA there is a full complement of 9 elected board couples. All the committees are up and running. There are over 50 volunteers serving on RCA World Service committees. That is such an amazing Spirit of GIVING!

During this recent holiday time, so many of us were out purchasing gifts ...we saw it... we needed it... someone else needed it.... we bought what we needed. We are at RCA meetings because we need that, too. So when the 7th Tradition basket goes around contribute generously. Think of it as giving the Great Spirit a gift.

My message to you as the year opens before us...Please send our World Service Office some extra love and support. Extra support this time of year helps the WSO to begin the New Year on a sound financial footing. The challenge of the Seventh Tradition is a personal challenge, reminding us to share and give of ourselves. Before recovery the only thing we ever supported were our addictions.

Please consider giving back to RCA and sending a 7th Tradition gift as a New Year's Present to yourself or a Valentine's Present in honor of your loved one. Your support relieves the pain of others through your outreach.

Send your donation to:

Recovering Couples Anonymous
World Service Office
P.O.Box 11029
Oakland, CA 94611
(510) 663 2312
wso-rca@pacbell.net
www.recovering-couples.org

Randy in recovery with Gerrie

Outside Literature Discussion cont.

Tradition 4 admits that a local RCA group has the right to be wrong. That's the process: group errs; group connects with RCA members and checks things out with other RCA groups; God prompts the group at group conscience once a month, and the minorities speak their piece. RCA Groups are responsible to no authority except their own group conscience.

If you are a minority who wants the focus on the 12 steps at each meeting and no outside literature, the process set out by the Traditions invites you to show up at every group conscience, and speak your views even if you are the minority. Then, "Let it go and let God" (as you understand God). The RCA group will need to be trusted to find what's right for their group. Sure, there is a lot of controversy as we learn and struggle to apply the Traditions. Hey RCAers, we can handle controversy! AA grew with controversy and RCA will grow if we work through the controversy. We have the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions to guide us.

I invite you to read the responses. You will see how different RCA groups interpreted Tradition 4, 1, 2, and 12 to answer the question. I know I learned a lot!

First, some thoughts from the member who posed the original question:

I've only been in RCA for 8 months but have been in recovery for over 14 years and have been very involved in service for most of that time. The issue of bringing in outside literature never was an issue in NA; we have our own and we do not bring the literature of any other groups to our meetings. When I've gone to OA and FAA only theirs or AA material was used. RCA is in a unique situation with its lean amount of officially approved material.

Outside Literature Discussion cont.

I was ruminating about this: thinking about the autonomy tradition; thinking about the 10th tradition and groups not endorsing other outside interests; how it appears that (we are endorsing outside interests) when outside literature is brought in; how much great material we have to share, etc., when something dawned on me.

This (issue) came up in our First Step. Question eight asks what other methods have we used to try to resolve our relationship issues. In this question we listed all of the additional literature, therapy, groups, etc. I believe the question is there is to help us see that the solution is in the Steps and not in all of this outside reading. We do not need outside literature. It's not a matter of whether to allow it or not; people should use whatever tools help them to enhance their recovery. But in the context of a meeting it makes no sense to use anything but the spiritual principles contained in the Steps.

During our business meeting valuable points of view were shared, as well as a revelation that my Higher Power gave me, and then I tried to be quiet and let the discussion continue. People discussed wanting to share things that helped them in their recoveries. I saw that as potentially dangerous. What if what helps one couple is a trigger for another, and who is in charge of deciding what is appropriate, etc? What if we confuse newcomers with other literature? One member was unhappy with the consensus that RCA has enough literature and that outside literature could be offered after the meeting. The group agreed to table the issue until something more formal or official came forth.

The miracle of watching group conscience in action was amazing to me. I trust the process and I'm glad that the discussion is going on. I look forward to seeing how it evolves.

Following are further reflections on this question / dilemma. All of us from other 12 Step programs know that RCA is another 12 Step fellowship. We know that if we work the principles, meaning the 12 Steps

and 12 Traditions, it will work if you work it. Take what you like and leave the rest. Don't lose your serenity over it!

Here are some thoughts that I have to share with our friends in Michigan and with my fellow board members.

I come from 20+ years in AA, and many years in ACA, OA, SAA and RCA. My background is Jewish by origin and UU by choice. I have seen outside materials used respectfully, unintentionally without regard to the sensitivity of others, and also abusively in disrespect of others.

I have read everybody's responses and am amazed at how right everyone is. That is part of the beauty and gift of recovery; it's for anyone who wants it. The only caution I give is that when outside material is used, especially of a specific religious or therapeutic nature, respect for views that are not our own be shown. When a text is being used in a manner that instructs by dogma, and that lessens the values of another, I find what works is to look for the universal message that would apply to all, instead of the dogmatic approach that may diminish another. We are here to pass on experience, strength and hope, not to create converts or alienate others. The universal message of loving grace is what matters, regardless of the sources that we draw upon. All sources and definitions of higher power are valid. Remember: our safety guidelines help us along when in doubt.

When we started recovery in RCA, some 18 years ago, the only RCA materials available were a list of the Steps (since changed) and a meeting agenda/format (also changed). There would have been no RCA recovery for us if we had been discouraged or prevented from using outside material. In fact, there would have been no RCA itself if the founders had not taken 12 Step material almost word for word from AA and "adapted" it.

Outside Literature Discussion cont.

In my opinion, the question is a variation on, "Would you rather be right than happy?" In this case, would you rather be right than in the happiest recovering relationship possible? Is there a "right" way? Since AA was the basic blueprint for RCA we can look there for inspiration. In AA, when one has a conflict with the way a group is doing things, one brings it up at a business meeting, presents one's case and tries to get a consensus. If that consensus is not what one can be comfortable with, one finds another meeting that does things more in line with one's belief systems. Or one starts a new group based on your/the group's particular bias and attracts like-minded people to join.

From this you might surmise I believe that when it comes to my personal recovery and growth, as well as our relationship recovery and growth, the "Here All and End All" does not lie in AA or RCA or any other "A" material. The founders of AA got their material from many, many sources, not the least of which were Emmet Fox's Sermon on the Mount, the old Oxford Group, the writings of the Filmores (who founded Unity), the Roman Catholic Church, and many others. It surprises many to learn that they even conducted séances for a time. To the best of my knowledge all 12 Step Programs refer to their how-to-do-it material as "a suggested program of recovery." And that surely is a fine suggestion! I believe this means it's a rough outline into which you fill the richness of individual experience. There are so many wonderful stories, books, and processes available in our modern world that can truly enhance our recoveries. It would be almost criminal to disavow them at face value.

As for the RCA group, I clearly believe from general 12 Step Traditions that group conscience establishes the rules and procedures in each group. Variety truly is the spice of life, and the group must work for the members. For instance, in our group the couple that chaired a weekly meeting decided what closing prayer would be used. This included anything from the Hand in Hand prayer, to the Lord's Prayer as in AA, to Mayan

Indian traditional prayer, to one they just made up on the spot, to a unified moment of silence.

AA has an expression that is probably applicable: "All it takes to start an AA meeting is a resentment and a coffee pot." And that is truly how the movement grew. If we personally found ourselves in the same situation in our group, we would probably go through the group conscience process, and if the group conscience was to not change the way the meeting was designed, we would grab our "coffee pot," start another meeting, and find kindred spirited couples who wanted to recover in such a setting.

And, because starting a new meeting is difficult, I would keep one foot in the old meeting, find a phone meeting, and keep close contact with our sponsor couple.

This has come up in our Los Altos group, and we would prohibit non-RCA couple literature, events, etc. to be announced during the meeting. Also we would not allow non-RCA couple program literature to be displayed on our literature table. After the meeting is finished couples are free to talk to each other about non-RCA couple programs.

Each group is autonomous, especially if it doesn't affect other RCA groups or RCA as a whole, which is hard to imagine that it could.

As I recall, AA literature says that when Bill W. would write back to such an enquirer, he would say something like, "Of course your group is completely free to do whatever it wants. However, the vast majority of AA experience indicates..." and then perhaps mention the perils of diluting the AA program through the use of outside literature, or the perception and suggestion of other affiliations, or the risk of confusing the newcomer about what is and what is not AA, etc. I'd imagine...AI-Anon would have similar suggestions or soft guidelines.

Outside Literature Discussion cont.

My AA General Service training around here was pretty strict about just AA stuff in AA meetings. So I was kind of shocked when a Grapevine article about AA Intergroups and Central Offices around the U.S. indicated that about half the Offices were like mine, but the other half sold outside, non-AA literature freely and openly, and as indicated by informed group consciences. The motive cited, as I recall, was to raise money to keep the AA Offices going.

Later, in 2001–2002, when the RCA Board was exploring an Office Oversight Committee and a delegate structure, ala SAA, well -- SAA at that time got a huge portion of its overall income from the sale of outside (non-SAA) literature.

(We) have been members of RCA for 17 years. It has been our understanding that individual groups decide how they will be run. In some groups one person is required to be a sex addict in recovery. I have brought in a meditation book that was not an "RCA" book when (we) were speaking, and read from it. Other members have done the same.... it just had to be related to couple recovery. In our particular Thursday night group most happen to be Catholic so "God" is used more than "Higher Power," and references may be made to Lent or another season of the Church. We use the old version of How it Works and The Promises. And we use the Third, edition of the Blue Book, not the Fourth.

The Monday night group has all new members and they use the 4th edition and the revised readings. When I go to the Monday group I adapt to their way of running the meeting. Newcomers need to know the guidelines of the group so they know how to follow them. Some groups use timers; in other groups if you are attending without your partner you cannot speak at the meeting.

When I was the WSO Office manager I attended RCA meetings around the country and each group was different. In Maryland they went around the room and each partner stated the things they had done that

week that were not helpful and the things their partner had done that were helpful. In Arizona one group has partners face each other when they talk. It is neat to see the different things groups do, and each group will not do things exactly the same.

I think the literature issue should be addressed with a sense of encouraging use of RCA literature. We provide a consistent loving Twelve-step message, and the idea of suggesting more ideas for literature. We then may be able to get permission to use it with approval and print it for RCA members, and thus raise more funds from literature. I think Hazelton is willing.

I agree that each group is autonomous. Within that autonomy, the fellowship should be respectful of other's beliefs, as was mentioned previously.

I think that if this is an issue for your group, then you should have a "group conscience" meeting. All who participate need to stretch and try to really listen to other's viewpoints, even if a viewpoint about a piece of literature is in the minority.

The other side of that is that if we are in that minority, and we still feel the traditions are being violated, we need to express ourselves clearly as (the original questioner) did. Our recovery is what is important, and if we talk it out and still feel adamant about "principles above personalities" then we need to move on and (maybe) start another RCA meeting.

Be sure you know what the principle is before you start walking. I really liked what someone said above regarding this. I think that if you are like me and not totally recovered with commitment issues, walking may be the easy way out. I also think that after any meeting people have a right to share what has helped them, and of course the idea that it probably isn't RCA "approved" should be mentioned.

So there you have it, a simple question with no absolute answers, just thoughtful, group-conscience style discussion.

Convention Artwork Contest Winner!

Congratulations to Walter A. for winning the San Francisco convention banner art work contest! It was a close contest with Mike and Collette N. (Idaho Falls, ID) designing the runner-up banner. I recommend to our fellowship that we use the latter banner the next time the convention is held in San Francisco. Again, congratulations, Walter! WONDERFUL WORK!!

The San Francisco Convention Committee

Join the Bed & 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!

"Guest bedroom, private bathroom, screened porch, grill, tennis courts, a lake, and a pool!" (404) 849-2189 – Teri 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 (near Washington, 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 – davidandelise@earthlink.net

Kindness Prayer

Keep us, O God, from close mindedness;
 Let us be large in thought, in word, in deed.
 Let us be done with faultfinding,
 And leave off self seeking.
 May we put away all pretense
 And meet each other face to face,
 Without self-pity and without prejudice.
 May we never be hasty in our judgment
 And be always generous and helpful.
 Teach us to put into action our better
 Impulses, straightforward and unafraid.
 Let us take time for the right things.
 Make us grow calm, serene and gentle.
 Grant that we may realize it is
 The little things that create difference,
 That in the big things in life we are one.
 And may we strive to touch and know
 The great common heart of us all;
 And, O God, let us not forget to be Kind.

Bill P and Lisa D.

(Printed with permission from Hazelden)

Dates To Remember

February 22–24, 2008 Face to Face World Service Board meeting in Fort Lauderdale (all board meetings are open meetings) For info contact kdmoran@gmail.com

February 24, 2008 Let the Sunshine In RCA South Florida Retreat in Fort Lauderdale noon to 5pm Potluck, Speaker couple from Hawaii, Recovering from our Triggers, etc. Go to www.recovering-couples.org and see the flyer for all the details. Contact Vicky and Jerry, IRW Florida harmony_couple@yahoo.com 954-432-8167

February 29–March 2, 2008 Asilomar RCA Retreat in Pacific Grove, CA Contact Ron and Kay 925-363-5416 ronjohn@berkeley.edu Lind and Brian 925 936 6965

April 15, 2008 Spring Hand in Hand articles are due. We welcome articles from the RCA fellowship. Send articles to [Elise marie-elise@earthlink.net](mailto:Elise%20marie-elise@earthlink.net) and [Kate kdmoran@gmail.com](mailto:Kate%20kdmoran@gmail.com). We'd love your recovery story.

June 15, 2008 Summer Hand in Hand articles are due. We welcome articles from the RCA fellowship.

August 1, 2, 3, 2008 RCACC in San Francisco – THE RENEWAL FESTIVAL "Embrace the Golden Gate, Embrace Recovery" Early Bird Discounted Registration: Only \$39.00 per person, available until May 1, 2008. Go to www.recovering-couples.org to get all the details.

September 26 –28th, 2008 Green Gulch Retreat Contact Linda and Brian 925-936-6965 Go to www.recovering-couples.org and see the flyer for all the details.

If other couples in your RCA group want the Hand in Hand Newsletter sent to their email address, they can connect with Steve A., the WSO Manager wso-rca@pacbell.net and be added to the email list.

Recovering Couples Anonymous

P.O. Box 11029
Oakland, CA 94611

Phone: (510) 663-2312

E-mail: wso-rca@pacbell.net

Web Site: <http://www.recovering-couples.org>

THE RENEWAL FESTIVAL
Embrace the Golden Gate, Embrace Recovery
August 1, 2, 3, 2008
DOUBLETREE HOTEL SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT

835 Airport Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94010-9949

Phone: 1-650-344-5500 Fax: 1-650-340-8851 On-line or phone reservations:

<https://secure.hilton.com/en/dt/res/index.jhtml>

CONVENTION REGISTRATION:

Registration for the conference and/or meals does **not** include hotel rooms. Please contact the hotel directly to reserve a room. **All registration information is strictly confidential.**

PLEASE PRINT:

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Do you want you email(s) & phone(s) on attendee list? ____ Yes ____ No

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FEES:

Early Bird Discounted Registration: Only \$39.00 per person, available until May 1, 2008

	Before June 1	On or after June 1
Registration only:	_____ \$45	_____ \$60
Meal Package:	_____ \$100	_____ \$120
Sat. Banquet only:	_____ \$50	_____ \$65
Fri. WSO RCA Lunch	_____ \$18	_____ \$20

Banquet Meal: Beef ____ Chicken ____ Vegetarian ____

If you are only sending in your registration at this time, do you plan on purchasing the Meal Package or Banquet meal at a later time? __ Yes ____ No

SORRY NO REFUNDS!!

SERVICE:

I/We are interested in providing service _____

As a leader Couple Topic we are interested in a break out meeting titled _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR CHECK OR MONEY ORDER

MAILING INFORMATION FOR REGISTRATION: Registration confirmation will be e-mailed.

Program packets will be available at the registration table at time of check in.

For additional information, contact Darcy at 650 966 1776 or email darcy@alteredcouture.com

Please mail your check or money order in US funds made payable to: **RCA 2008** c/o Darcy Fowkes, 52 Woods Lane, Los Altos, CA 94023

Hotel Reservation Info:

1. On-line or phone reservations <https://secure.hilton.com/en/dt/res/index.jhtml>
2. To receive the discounted rate when registering, you must mention **RCA 2008**. The San Francisco Doubletree is Smoke-Free.
3. The special convention rate is \$129.00 per night per room.
4. Special convention rate not guaranteed after July 18th, so please make reservations early.
5. Make any special needs room arrangements directly with the hotel.

7th Tradition Donations

10/01/2007 through 12/31/2007

Group

-26005 Hamilton, ONT Canada	\$100.00
-00000 Ahwatukee, AZ	\$50.00
-43020 Tucson, AZ	\$100.00
-45015 Jamestown, CA	\$190.00
-45045 Culver City, CA Sunday Night CLARE Group	\$40.00
-45050 Oakland, CA	\$224.00
-45060 Los Altos, CA	\$500.00
-45052 Oakland Earlybirds	\$160.30
-45100 Santa Cruz, CA	\$250.00
-45105 Walnut Creek, CA	\$500.00
- Idaho Falls, ID SOS	\$45.00
-60015 Rockville, MD	\$121.00
-61020 Norwell, MA	\$60.00
-62000 Birmingham, MI	\$110.10
-66002 Bozeman, MT	\$39.50
- Salem, OR	\$150.00
-72010 Riverhead, NY	\$75.00
-72050 Warwick, NY	\$40.00
-83020 Ft. Worth, TX	\$150.00
-83060 Austin, TX Riverbend	\$31.88

Individual Donations

\$2,785.00 from six individual couples

Total Donations

\$5,922.28