

From: A member of the Sunday Evening Early Birds Group of Oakland, California,  
Dated: August 11, 2007]

Questionnaire  
2006 4th edition Blue Book

**1. Do the language and tone of the book feel welcoming to you, whatever your 12-Step affiliation may be? If not, what is missing?**

*[Introduction to this RCAer's responses: given the current (August 2007) stated timeline for submitting the final draft revision to delegates for voting up/down, these following comments are probably not useful for that particular revision process. Thus these responses are offered as part of RCA's overall process of collecting and disseminating Fellowship feedback; it is hoped that these comments would be considered and -- if some are adjudged worthwhile -- incorporated in some other future edition of the blue book.]*

*[Other comments have been submitted separately that are hopefully useable and timely for the 2008 edition.]*

**2. Is the treatment of the topics balanced? If anything is given too much or too little emphasis, please specify what that is.**

Actual and varied RCA experience in couple sponsorship is under-represented. And some of the draft text again seems to prescribe behaviors and beliefs for everyone, rather than acknowledging the diversity of "what works" for different sponsee couples and different sponsor couples. Page 69 bottom seems to imply that an individual member of a sponsee couple must not be in communication with an individual member of their sponsoring couple; but the shared experience in our RCA home group is otherwise.

Page 74 seems to prohibit the sponsoring couple from "discussing our own problems" with the couple being sponsored; the admonition in this part of the text appears to be to "stay detached and objective." In AA it's one alcoholic talking to another, and identifying with rather than questing after objectivity and distance. In our RCA service with others we often discuss our own problems with our sponsees; yet in contrast, our current RCA sponsors do not. Can there be spiritual space within RCA's basic text for a diversity of experience?

In fact, the draft text in many other areas seems loud and clear in promoting diversity in RCA membership but muted and muddled in supporting diversity in how different RCAers work their programs, use the program, view the program, support their meetings, understand and practice the Traditions, etc.

In my experience, many couples report that when they first came into RCA they had expected all their problems to disappear. They say this paralleled their experience when one partner had hit bottom and had been designated as the addict and had entered recovery: these couples report that they thought all would be roses thereon. Then they experienced the ups and downs and chaos of early coupleship recovery. This experience is fairly represented in the RCA text.

However, there is a similar situation in terms of new meetings and new groups: many of these groups seem to expect to sail happily into the sunset. Instead they discover that other prospective couples declare their intention to join RCA but don't; or they leave early on, after they think they're getting better. This experience is not reflected in the draft text.

Other fellowship experiences that seems under-represented or not represented include the following: the reality that coupleship recovery can take a very long time; coupleship loss of control and hopelessness; spousal abuse and physical violence; shame-based sexuality, and couples' many and painful difficulties with sex; sexual recovery and healthy sexuality, sexual reconnection, and recovery from barriers to sexual intimacy; being separate and being paired -- how do RCA couples actually do this; the core principles presented in the founder's address; very little about couples' actual spiritual awakenings within RCA.

From the experience of our coupleship recovery and our individual recoveries, there is way too little said about choice, and about denial, and about shared denial. Does the word "denial" appear anywhere else other than on page 15?

Perhaps a future edition could attempt to share with some degree of completeness and thoroughness members' actual experience around accepting that couple recovery is a challenging, evolving, and quite often lengthy journey. The earliest text edition refers to the honeymoon phase of RCA, during which many couples "feel better" and figure they don't need RCA anymore and therefore leave; given that the earliest editions were when RCA was much younger, there is little textually shared experience about sticking it out in RCA for several years beyond just hitting bottom and early recovery.

Relatedly the experience is under-represented of those many RCAers in meetings and at conventions who share that well after a few years in RCA they discovered and uncovered other or secondary addictions or co-addictions -- more elements of their attempts to recover from their addicted and destructive relationship than had been identified in their earlier First Steps or Fourth Steps.

**3. Is there anything in this revised Blue Book you find offensive? What would you like in place of this if anything?**

*[Other comments hopefully useable for the 2008 edition have been submitted separately.]*

**4. Please tell us of changes from previous editions you like and don't like.**

The "Suggested Meeting Topics" are for me stronger than almost anything else in the draft or prior editions. A future (2013?) edition might benefit from highlighting these topics and their valuable, "spot-on" essays more prominently.

**5. Has there been anything significant in your couple's recovery, particularly of a spiritual nature, that is not mentioned somewhere in the Blue Book?**

*[Other comments hopefully useable for the 2008 edition have been submitted separately.]*

**6. Do you have a practice or "Tool" not described in the Blue Book?**

*[Other comments hopefully useable for the 2008 edition have been submitted separately.]*

**7. Has there been anything in your meeting's success that is not mentioned in the Traditions in the Blue Book such as socializing outside meetings or other meeting practices?**

Page 34, closed meetings: the text has little actual experience to share here. How/why is this a problem? Are there "group unity" solutions / behaviors / suggestions / experiences to share here?

**8. In what ways could the spirituality of the program be better expressed?**

*[Other comments hopefully useable for the 2008 edition have been submitted separately.]*

**9. In what ways could the RCA Blue Book better support your meeting or help you start a new meeting?**

*[Other comments hopefully useable for the 2008 edition have been submitted separately.]*

**10. Some RCA members want the 3 edition of the Blue Book available. Would you purchase the 3 edition of the Blue Book in preference to this 4 edition if you could do it over? Would you use both? Is there a place for the 3 edition if it meets AA guidelines?**

*[Other comments hopefully useable for the 2008 edition have been submitted separately.]*

**11. Should the stories be retained if the couple has split up? Would you write your couple's story? Should real names be or not be included in the stories?**

*[Other comments hopefully useable for the 2008 edition have been submitted separately.]*

**12. Is the writing in the Blue Book consistent with and supportive of RCA and its traditions?**

Is it the stance and philosophy of this draft's writers that the Steps relate to the health of the coupleship, while the Traditions relate to the health of the group? If so, a number of passages in the textual essays pp 60-67 would appear irrelevant or inappropriate. There are various examples. For Tradition Two regarding the group's ultimate authority, the text tells us "we are reminded that equality belongs also in our family units." Also regarding Two and RCA sponsorship, "It will prevent [nota bene: more absolutism!] sponsor couple[s] from assuming authority or responsibility over sponsee couples.]"

In the textual essay of Tradition Four, which is about group autonomy, the draft text warns us, "We are all responsible to make our program a program of attraction" -- which in other Fellowships goes with Tradition Eleven -- and that we are to "carry a unified message to the couples who are still suffering" -- which goes in other fellowships with Tradition Five, our primary purpose.

Again in the text for Tradition Five, "The RCA philosophy lies within Tradition Five. RCA believes that a coupleship is like an infant, needing constant nurturing and care from both partners." Lifted out of the "Our Philosophy" section of the Preamble of the 1996 edition/first printing -- and also repetitive of page 8 of the 2008 draft.

Tradition Ten cautions against opinions on outside issues and against public controversy. Can a future text incorporate some of the specific, actual examples from the experience of the RCA fellowship?

**13. Do you find the grammar, person, and tense of the Blue Book clear, comfortable, and without gender discrimination?**

*[Other comments hopefully useable for the 2008 edition have been submitted separately.]*

**14. What would you like to see added to the Blue Book? Why?**

Please add references to delegate couples to the various portions of the text which speak to meeting service and fellowship group consciences etc.

A new / different ISBN number.

**15. What would you like to see deleted from the Blue Book? Why? Please use the back for additional comments. The additional comments in 2005 were very helpful in writing this 2006 edition.**

*[Other comments hopefully useable for the 2008 edition have been submitted separately.]*