

Many couples have found it helpful to invite their Higher Power into their Step Work starting with Step Two. Couples may invite their Higher Power in whatever manner feels right to them. Most of us have found that only by inviting our Higher Power into our coupleships have we received the serenity we sought.

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.

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For more information:

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RECOVERING COUPLES ANONYMOUS®

Who We Are: A Recovering Couples Anonymous Pamphlet



RCA®

Who We Are

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 and seek to build intimacy together. We have all sought healing in Recovering Couples Anonymous (RCA).

Although we have many relationships, we have only one coupleship. We restrict ourselves to one partner for the full expression of our physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual love. We try to honor the special nature of our love by doing spontaneous things with our partners.

It can be easy to become so preoccupied with our work, children, elderly parents, or other distractions that we neglect our partners. We may feel there will always be time for our partners later so we do not pay them the special attention they deserve today. A nurturing, healthy coupleship requires regular attention to function at a level that gives the highest satisfaction. Keeping our focus on our love can bring pleasures we never believed possible.

Our Philosophy

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

To be successful in any Twelve-Step program, at a minimum there's something you

need to do. In AA you stay sober, in OA you stay abstinent, in NA you stay clean, and in RCA you *stay committed*. This commitment to not leave the coupleship, even if you find it necessary to live apart, provides a foundation on which you can grow as a couple.

We believe that a coupleship needs constant nurturing and care from both partners. It is important that each partner accept mutual responsibility for the problems and progress of the coupleship — and furthermore, that each recognizes individual recovery as an important factor in couple recovery.

Our philosophy also includes the need for a couple to treat their coupleship as an *entity*, *distinct* and *separate* from their individual recoveries. This “entity,” or “coupleship,” resembles a little child needing to be nurtured by its parents (the two members of the coupleship) and needs the same nurturing and recovery as individuals. As couples we need meetings, sponsors, service, and a Twelve-Step program.

The process of healing the coupleship stimulates a feeling of hope. We are developing new, healthy behaviors, and being more respectful of each other. We are beginning to forgive ourselves and look forward to our future. We believe healing begins when we first commit to recover *together*. For many of us this date has become a second anniversary.

Honesty and personal responsibility are keys to this program. Before recovery many of us did not feel OK about ourselves, and we blamed somebody or something else—usually our partners. We focused on how we wanted to change our partners rather than recognizing how we needed to change ourselves. The blame was always on our partners.

As we worked the Twelve Steps of RCA, we began to recognize we were the source of our own problems. We could only change ourselves, and we needed to change if we were going to feel better. We needed to reverse the process of blaming our partners by taking responsibility for our own behavior. Slips or relapses occur when we refuse to accept responsibility for our actions, expressed as blaming behavior and not working the program together. Usually we know when we make slips because we become distant from our partners.

Many of us escape, or go numb, in a variety of ways that we have known since childhood. This distance may lead to relapses in our individual recoveries as we revert to old ways of coping. However, even though slips in our individual programs usually affect our relationships, they may not lead to slips in couple recovery, if we are honest.

In the RCA program, we are learning to face our problems as a couple. We are learning to express our true feelings — even about large issues. We are learning to fight fairly. Some of us are writing fair fighting contracts to help us express conflict respectfully.

We are recognizing and breaking the patterns of dysfunction we learned from our families of origin. As we grow through using the RCA Steps, Tools, and Traditions in our coupleships, we learn to play and have fun together, and to be proud of ourselves as couples.

Working the Steps

RCA is first and foremost a Twelve-Step program. Working the Twelve Steps of RCA together, *as a couple*, offers a unique recovery experience. This process opens doors to both *individual* and *couple* recovery.