Welcome to Summer!

Summer is in full swing—and with that, the longest days of the year!

What a difference...

This summer we may have many unanswered questions on our minds. A lot has changed over the past few months. As more and more city and state Covid-19 restrictions relax, what will things be like? What will the summer of 2020 bring? How do we continue from here? One question we can ask ourselves when everything else is in flux is, “Am I making my mental health my supreme goal and peace my supreme value?” How we take care of our mental health may be expressed in different ways, but, for most of us, attending regular meetings is part of that goal. Thanks to the hard work of area leaders, it has become easier than ever to attend remote meetings. We are looking forward to resuming some of our in-person meetings soon. Practicing to be the patient patient has definitely helped in the past and continues to aid us now, in a time of uncertainty. We have learned well “to know that we don’t know,” and that helps us to keep our inner peace no matter what challenges life presents to us!

“Life is a business. There is or ought to be time in everybody’s routine to play and toy, to amuse himself with games and to divert his attention from the serious aspects of the business of living. Nevertheless, life is not a game; it is a business which must be toiled at and attended to. Its business is to create and maintain values (family, community, education, religion, sociability). The trouble is that values are delicate and easily disturbed. They are likely to be disturbed through destructive forces arising in inner environment (symptoms and temper) or from commotions affecting outer environment (strife and dissension between persons and groups). Since strife and dissension usually are the result of temper, we may safely assume that the peace of people, families or communities is threatened by two elements: symptoms that interfere with inner peace, and temper that obstructs both inner and outer peace. To sum up: life needs inner and outer peace for producing and maintaining values. The factors which endanger peace are symptoms and temper. Life’s principal business is, therefore, to reduce both symptoms and temper to a minimum.”

- Manage Your Fears, Manage Your Anger, p 216-7

HAPPY SUMMER from your Recovery Reporter
Editors: Helen and Dave

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Happy summer to everyone and what a year it has been so far! The pandemic and recent events in our country have caused stress, anxiety and symptoms too numerous to mention. We need the Recovery Method more than ever. More than 600 people have signed up for Daily Spots, and more than 1,500 receive our Weekly Wisdoms—tools to help stay calm and cope. We’ve increased our Facebook activity, and are reactivating our Twitter account.

Our aim is to reach new people, to provide help where it’s needed most. Please join me in welcoming newcomers to meetings—help coach them and teach them our tools and techniques. One of the advantages of remote meetings, whether they be telephone, online or chat format is that people are not restricted to their own geographic areas. This is an opportunity for newcomers to find us, or for you to attend a new meeting at a time that’s convenient for you. Give remote meetings a try!

Once things start opening up again, it’s important to continue to follow safety guidelines such as wearing masks, washing hands, and maintaining social distance. We are not rushing into re-opening meetings. Each group leader will consult with their area leader to determine the best time under local mandates and individual circumstances. Together, we’ll stay safe and healthy. It’s been amazing and heartwarming to see how everyone has worked together to keep meetings going—Endorse your efforts!

Take care and be well,

Sandra K. Wilcoxon, CEO

PS: We invite you to post pictures of your coloring art or favorite spots from the Daily Spots and the Journal on our regular Facebook page. Check it out at https://www.facebook.com/RecoveryIntl/

Stories of Hope

At a young age, I suffered from anxiety, fear and depression, fear of knives and sharp objects, fear of harming myself and others, fear of cancer and heart attack, as well as, fear of being alone or in a crowd. These symptoms continued for over two years. I was finally seen by a psychologist who recommended a program called Recovery International. At the very first meeting, the leader gave an example and stated that before RI she had the same fears. At last I found the right place! I was determined to get well and travelled twice weekly from Queens to Manhattan at night to attend the meetings. It wasn’t easy, but as Dr. Low says, “Simple but not easy!”

I have spent a lifetime in RI; I will be 91 years old in July, but it was a fascinating time that included being widowed at 46 years old with five teenagers, after having gone through my husband’s cancer sickness and death. I started college at 47 and completed my education at 56, with an MSW and a new husband. I received my CAC, Certified Addiction Counselor, at 62, and retired at 68. I am continuing to lead two ZOOM meetings a week, as well as training two assistant leaders and sharing area leadership with Nancy L.

Always Endorsing,
Joan S., a very grateful RI member

Archival Materials Study

Everyone interested in Dr. Low’s original publications, the periodic BOOK STUDIES will be bringing you an interesting look at the history of RI, with special bonuses to accompany these amazing original archives:

* Group Psychotherapy – Recovery’s original textbook
COMING SOON!!! We are in the process of putting it together for you!

(Please email davesdecafe@gmail.com to be added to the list, if you are not already on it.)
Wisdom of Dr. Low

How to prevent vicious cycles from developing

It’s easy to lose track of our goals when temper and symptoms interfere. Dr. Low prescribed the cure of determined, continuous trigger spotting.

"[H]e will have to acquire skill in spotting each symptom as it arises and each sabotaging trend as it emerges. The symptoms will have to be spotted in their initial stage before they reach their peak of intensity. At the moment the “fatigue” begins to stir in the morning, the spot diagnosis of a harmless nervous disturbance must be made instantly. Likewise, if worry or alarm supervene, the spot diagnosis of sabotage must immediately dominate the patient’s mind. If the spotting is done promptly, both the symptom and the sabotage will spend themselves without leading to a vicious cycle. In the beginning, the spotting will have to be done consciously and laboriously, but with continued practice and experience, the process will become relatively automatic and spontaneous."

Mental Health through Will-Training Chapter 38, Sabotage Method No. 6: Failure to Practice “Spot Diagnosis”

Recovery Questions I can ask myself to work things down

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>Is this a triviality or an emergency?</td>
<td>Am I remembering to endorse for every effort and not just for outcome?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can I identify my fearful and angry tempers?</td>
<td>Can I accept my limitations?</td>
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<td>Am I trying to be exceptional or can I be satisfied with just being average?</td>
<td>Am I making outer endorsements more important that at least one inner endorsement?</td>
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<td>Am I being objective?</td>
<td>Can I express myself in a calm and cultured manner?</td>
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<td>Am I attaching danger to my symptoms?</td>
<td>Is it possible that I might be blind to the other side of the story?</td>
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<td>Is my Imagination on fire?</td>
<td>Am I changing my thoughts and moving my muscles?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are my thoughts realistic?</td>
<td>Am I aware of the Improvement I have made over former days before my Recovery training?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am I remembering that this event and my symptoms phasic not basic?</td>
<td>Am I self-sabotaging?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Am I endorsing for effort and not just for outcome?</td>
<td>Am I letting my feelings dictate my actions?</td>
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<td>Can I do things in part acts?</td>
<td>What poor habits are holding me back?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did I substitute the total view or a partial viewpoint?</td>
<td>Am I judging myself and or others?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How am I interpreting this event?</td>
<td>Am I choosing peace over power?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Am I replacing insecure thoughts for secure thoughts?</td>
<td>Is there room for humor?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Am I willing to bear discomfort in order to gain comfort?</td>
<td>Is my will saying yes or no?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Am I choosing wants over needs?</td>
<td>Am I making my mental health my supreme goal, inner peace my supreme value?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am I being self-led rather than symptom-led?</td>
<td>Am I making my Recovery practice a business or a game?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do I realize every act of self-control leads to a sense of self-respect?</td>
<td>Am I highlighting my gains and downplaying my failures?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am I being too serious?</td>
<td>— Kathleen R.</td>
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Send us your online and conference call meeting information

Throughout the United States and Canada, in many areas, face-to-face meetings have been suspended. Thanks to the heroic efforts of local volunteers, many of those meetings are up and running using remote meeting software and conference calls. Each of you can endorse for bearing the discomfort of switching over to this new format to keep your meetings intact to provide this important service for participants.

Headquarters is compiling a comprehensive list of meetings that are operating remotely. Please email your lists of online meetings to editor@recoveryinternational.org

Include the following information:

- Meeting city and state
- Meeting day and time, including time zone
- Meeting contact first name
- Meeting contact telephone number
- Meeting contact email address

All of this information will automatically be sent to Headquarters and will be updated on the Recovery International Find a Meeting page.

IMPORTANT: Please also let us know if you are resuming face-to-face meetings!
Puerto Rico

We have a Spanish-speaking telephone meeting on Thursdays at 6:30 PM Eastern time. Anyone can join. You do not need to get advance permission. Just call 701-801-6661 to join our confidential meeting. (You do not have to enter a meeting number.) Come join us and start learning the method developed by Abraham Low, MD to help us to deal with the stresses we are all facing today.

If you have questions please email Maritza R. maritzabachier@gmail.com

South Central Ohio and Kentucky - Area 141

Area 141 has been adjusting to the current health situation by converting 4 of the 7 meetings in the area to telephone conference meetings. These telephone meetings are led by leaders in the Louisville, KY and Dayton, Cincinnati, and Columbus, OH areas. The members of the area are thankful to be able to continue their meetings in this manner and it has been a real boost to have people from all over the country attend these meetings! One of the groups in the area, in Lakeside Park, KY, has received permission from their meeting place to resume a community meeting starting June 15 with social distancing procedures in place.

Decision Terminates Panic.

Have the courage to make mistake. Many times people have ambitious goals. They focus on the big picture and lack focus. Old habits can be broken. There are several principles which can help the patient to recall and help them to cope up with distress. COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY! When they interact, Recovery Method gives them confidence to slowly tackle their problems. It develops Proactiveness and Positivity in the patient.

Benefits of Recovery Method

Recovery Method helps people to move toward recovery. In India, there is acute shortage of psychiatrist, mental health professionals and psychologists. Every therapy is different and works different for every patient. For the patient who wants to take efforts, Recovery Method will be useful.

Dr. Vartak has been publishing a series of articles in the Deccan Herald newspaper on the Recovery tools that can be applied to people suffering from fear during the pandemic.

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Dr. Low's Enduring Fight for the Mentally Ill

"My Finer Ones"

Dr. Low's "My Finer Ones" is a book of personal reflections on the patients he treated. It is a moving account of the challenges he faced as a psychiatrist, and the profound effect his work had on his patients. The book includes personal stories from patients who were touched by Dr. Low's dedication and commitment to their well-being. It is a testament to the power of compassionate care and the lasting impact it can have on the lives of those we serve.

India

The founder of our India group is staying busy during the pandemic.


Topic: Recovery Method

Recovery Method is used in Self Help Group. The method was developed in USA by Abraham Low in the 3rd and 4th decade of last century. The Recovery Method helps to cope up with troubling events, situations to take steps and move ahead. It changes the approach towards symptoms. From thinking bigger picture it shifts attention to look at smaller things in life using Recovery tools. The writing of Abraham Low reflects CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) principles. Several principles that we consider today come from his writing. For e.g., maintaining my inner peace is supreme goal. Choices are available! People don’t irritate me, I get irritated. I cannot control the external environment. Recovery Method helps people take responsibility for their own actions and behavior.

Divide it in Bits and Make it Manageable!!!

One need not need to complete all in one go especially when the internal system is fragile. Recovery Method is to endorse and appreciate the effort one is taking to change. EVERY ACT OF SELF CONTROL LEADS TO SELF RESPECT. So, the endorsement is internal.
San Diego, CA – Area 25

RI San Diego Honored as Outstanding Community Partner of the Year

The San Diego County Suicide Prevention Council (SPC) holds its Annual Stakeholders Meeting in June to share progress and spotlight organizations and individuals working on suicide prevention in the community. Each year, three awards are given to members of the SPC who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to suicide prevention and mental health in San Diego. The team at the SPC selects awardees based on their work and dedication to the mission. This year, Lisa G., Project Manager of RI (Recovery International), will be receiving the Outstanding Community Partner award. Lisa has lived and thrived in spite of mental illness. Twenty-five years ago, she was suffering from bipolar symptoms; lost her job, and was hospitalized to prevent suicide. That low ultimately led her to rebuild her life in all areas. Lisa has worked for RI for more than 20 years. Under Lisa’s leadership, San Diego has expanded to 30 meetings. Her proudest accomplishment, however, is her hard work on her own mental health and how it flourishes through her sons. They are both therapists!

Lisa demonstrates that we are not our illness. She gives people hope. We may feel helpless, but there are no hopeless cases.

The award was presented to Lisa via ZOOM, on June 23.

Go to our website recoveryinternational.org to sign up for free Daily Spots and see more stories in the electronic version of the Recovery Reporter!

San Francisco Bay – Area 20

Joey P. is the leader of the Solano State Prison RI group. On May 27, he went before the Board of Parole Hearings and was found suitable. The Board has 120 days to review the parole and then the Governor has 30 days to veto it. Assuming all goes well he will parole to Oakland. He has a job lined up as a drug and alcohol counselor with Options Recovery Services, where he will join John S., the paroled founder of the Solano group. He also has a part-time job offer with Marin Shakespeare Company. Visit https://bit.ly/2XW61Dt to see a CNN story about Shakespeare in Prison featuring Joey as Hamlet.

Although, having been found suitable means that he can go home, he doesn’t believe that his self-improvement should stop. With the reading he has been doing he has become more aware of the automatic reactions that he has conditioned himself to feel. If someone irritates him, not only does he use the RI tool, “People do things that annoy me, not necessarily to annoy me,” but he also thinks, “Where is this coming from? Why do I perceive this as annoying when it doesn’t bother other people?”

He says that he isn’t perfect, and he is going to continue to make mistakes, but as long as he learns from those mistakes and makes a genuine effort to be better, behave better and to think better, he is making progress, and that is all he can hope for.

Joey can endorse for a good effort with a good result!

Joey as Puck in A Midsummer Night’s Dream.
Members Corner

My name is David S., and I was quite active with Recovery mostly in the 80’s and 90’s. I regularly attended hillside, Illinois led by Mary Jane M. Also Jack A. was quite active and helped me become a group leader in both Elk Grove Village and Glenview meetings. No doubt Recovery saved my life during some challenging years. We now live in Bluffton, South Carolina in a Sun City over 55 community. Unfortunately this area is void of meetings but I’m pleased to see how much progress you have made with online/remote meetings. Recovery has no doubt continued to prosper. I remember attending meetings on Michigan Avenue with original patients of Dr. Low. Although I no longer attend meetings the program and all of Dr. Low’s teachings are still very much a part of me and applied often, especially given the present pandemic challenge.

Thanks Again and Keep Endorsing!

In recognition of our Long-time Members

Thank you for your service Jack!!

Jack S., Boro Park, Brooklyn, New York, YM-YWHA

Jack, 83 years young, has been a grateful member and leader of Recovery since 1969. For 51 years Jack has served his local community as both Recovery member and leader. Referred to as “Uncle Jack” by many, he says his 3 favorite spotting are: “Symptoms are distressing, not dangerous; Be sympathetic, not sentimental; and, the body, mind and soul is a self-healing organism…so smile at the temper you are producing!” He trained in Cleveland under Marie B., and in NYC under Gertrude S., and is very grateful for their service and leadership. Recovery helped Jack face, tolerate and endure both successes and failures, forgive himself and others, and get along better with others. He warmly welcomes you to his ZOOM meeting on Tuesdays at 7:15 EST Meeting ID 314 1011 4012

“Discomfort is a thing to be bravely faced humbly tolerated and patiently born!” Under this I have a picture of a 30 pound bobcat squatting on a table, hugging the top of its owner’s head, covering her eyes with its huge paw. The owner is hugging back, laughing. And “You are still a valuable, average, worthwhile person of integrity even when having symptoms.”

Hope this helps someone, Endorse! from Lorraine V.

Happy Recovery Birthday to Julia “Judy” White celebrating 60th RI anniversary!!!

Judy White’s 60th Recovery leader anniversary is coming up in September 2020. She joined Recovery in June 1959 and became the group’s leader in September 1960. She “found” Recovery when her older sister took her to two meetings and made her promise that she would attend at least two more meetings. She joined Recovery because she was very insecure, had low self-esteem and a very serious colitis condition. By the end of her fourth week of participation she realized it could help her. There were Recovery tools she could use. The very first time she used a tool - objectivity - she was in the kitchen and being verbally demeaned. She thought of objectivity and focused on each letter of the name of the refrigerator - Westinghouse! Next she decided to “move her muscles” and walk away and she refused to take part in the verbal argument. Then she endorsed herself for using the tools of Recovery. In her early weeks of participation in meetings she remembered how they read a chapter from the book, and went over the list of tools. A year later in June 1960, the leader of her group told her that she would be taking over as group leader in September. Two years later, she had started three more groups in the Dayton area and the Cincinnati area leader turned over the Dayton and Midwestern Ohio area to her. Eventually there were a dozen groups meeting regularly in her area. She has said many times that she believes Recovery saved her life! It helped relieve her colitis to the point that her doctor told her he was looking at a well person. She has some advice for new members. Get the book, Mental Health Through Will Training, and read it. Attend meetings. Know and use the tools of RI. And be sure to endorse yourself for the effort you are making to learn to help yourself.

Recently, she decided to retire as a group leader after 60 years. On September 1, 2020 she will celebrate her 91st birthday.
Recovery Examples

Thank you for your poems Fran! New Orleans, Area 75

Disappointment

There is no ointment For disappointment. We all get news that brings the blues. No quick fix for those miss-hits. We learn to take them all in stride, and for that, develop pride, to take the knocks and re-emerge.

In a positive-thinking surge. Frustrations come in every day; Instead of pout, we find a way to use our humor, and build up strengths To function well at any length. So next time bad news comes to you, Remember things that you can do-- Like change your thoughts productively And positive is what you’ll be.

Anger

Anger, anger, bang! in my brain. I feel the urge to fight; something isn’t right… Ahh, the red flag to stop and spot with tools from Dr. Low, so I go into Recovery mode and the feeling is rendered meaningless, old. The impulse to lash out dissolves into something to laugh about. Laughter lightens up the load and all the rest of the day is good.

Before I had my Recovery training I would have sent him an angry text message. Now, I emailed him the relevant work information; “I behaved in a cultured manner,” and reminded myself “don’t expect difficult people not to be difficult.” I am treating my mental health as a business, not a game.

Anthony S., San Francisco, CA

Every act of self-control leads to an equal measure of self-respect

Today, my coworker sent me a series of text messages, called me a weirdo, and said I have bad taste in movies. I am in temper and symptoms!

The physical feelings I experienced are tenseness in my shoulders and jaw. The mental feelings I experienced are angry and fearful thoughts, disturbing impulses, and raised feelings.

I spotted angry temper (resentment, impatience, disgust). I spotted fearful temper (preoccupation, worry). The RI tools I used: calm begets calm, temper begets temper; express my feelings not my temper; move my muscles; every act of self-control leads to self-respect. I endorsed for my effort, not only the result.

Before my RI training, I would have sent him an angry text message. Now, I emailed him the relevant work information; “I behaved in a cultured manner,” and reminded myself “don’t expect difficult people not to be difficult.” I am treating my mental health as a business, not a game.

Rodger H., Vacaville, CA

Any decision will steady you

I had a doctor’s appointment for 7:30 AM. I had plans to go from there directly to work. I was waiting to be taken to the appointment. I started watching the clock and noticed that time was passing. I started to get frustrated. That’s when I worked myself up. I had palpitations. I had negative self-talk, like “Obviously someone can’t do their job correctly.”

I had angry temper at the person who hadn’t showed up. I had fearful temper since I had told everyone that I would be at work at a certain time. I felt that I was letting down the people who were waiting for me. The tool I used was, “Any decision will steady you.” I made the decision to cancel the appointment and just move beyond it. I let it go. I endorsed for remaining calm and not letting this thing eat away at me.

Before my RI training, I would have taken it personally. I would have taken it out on one of the staff in my building. My frustrations would have boiled over, there would have been an explosion, and at the end of it all I would have felt guilty because I would have taken it out on an innocent person who had nothing to do with it.

Rodger H., Vacaville, CA

Spot-On: Max’s Example

Step 1: I was waiting for a friend, and she was late. That’s when I started getting worked up.

Step 2: I was clenching my jaw, thinking angry thoughts.

Step 3: I was afraid she blew me off, that she didn’t care to show up. I was angry she kept me waiting. I spotted that I should excuse, not accuse, that I shouldn’t take it personally—maybe she couldn’t help it. I endorsed for realizing I could control my reaction.

Step 4: Before this, I would have yelled at her when she got there, we would have fought, and it would have ruined the whole evening. Now, I can relax and figure out a plan B.

© Recovery International 2020

Coming this Fall!

Update of The Power to Change program for teens!
In Memoriam

Teresa Fistere passed away on June 3, 2020, after dealing with a number of medical and other issues. She was a long-time member of Recovery International, and was a leader of several groups over the years. Teresa was always kind and generous with her time and she truly enjoyed working with newcomers. Teresa was married to John F. for almost 30 years, and they enjoyed skiing, sailing, and especially singing in the San Diego Festival Chorus, as well as the Unity San Diego Choir. She owned and operated San Diego Walking Tours, which educated groups in Old Town San Diego history. We will remember her cheery spirit and loving ways.

Gloria Martin passed away on April 25, 2020, in Oakland, California. She was a longtime member of the Oakland Saturday group. Those who spent time with her in group were impressed with her unflagging effort to gain victory over temper. It was an inspiration to see her try, fail, try, fail, try and finally succeed. She said that she could not have done it without RI. The reward for her effort was a fulfilling life in the warm embrace of a loving family.

The late, great John Durkin who passed away on April 29th, 2020, was a pillar of Recovery in Area Group 155 Delaware Valley. John was trained by Phil Crane and attended Phil’s Chicago meeting three times a week for seven years. John started about six RI meetings in South Jersey and Lansdale PA. Thank you for all your years of service, John D., you will be sorely missed!