



Wishing you a very *Happy AVERAGE* Holiday Season!

The fall months are an all-time favorite for most of us! With the holidays approaching and the cool autumn weather, there seems to be a liveliness in the air that invigorates us and makes us look forward to the season's social calendar and solitude of longer nights in cozy weather. A perfect time to curl up next to the fire and read a favorite book. Right? Well, not exactly. It's also a very busy time, and this can add to overextended schedules and added stress. Retail stores are in full gear, and we're often bombarded with ads of sugar plum fairies, perfect dinners—our holiday tables surrounded by perfect siblings, not to mention unlimited funds.

Then there are today's hotbed topics, which spur vast differences of opinion, and we may be having people over who don't know the RI rules about certain topics. This is the holiday table that we need to manage right down to seating one person at one end of the table and another person at the other. Or perhaps avoiding inviting someone all together. It's a lot.

So how do we keep our cool, and the biscuits and stuffing warm, at the same time? Time to slow down. Shut the devices off for a moment. Take a seat and just breathe. It's almost the end of the year and we've barely endorsed ourselves for all we've done so far. No worries if that pumpkin pie burns. It's just another average holiday! Dr. Low said, "Stop blaming yourself for your averageness, for your average human imperfection, for human limitations. And if you stop blaming yourself, you will incidentally, naturally, whittle down that thing that you now call, that I ask you to call, the *passion for self-distrust*." (*Manage Your Fears Manage Your Anger*, pg. 311)

Enjoy the rest of this beautiful fall season and have a fantastic Holiday!

Your Contributing Editors, Helen and Dave

Annual Holiday Zoom Celebration

Sunday, December 7, 4:00 p.m. Eastern time

Join the festivities as we gather via Zoom to celebrate the holidays with songs, poems and games about RI. If you'd like to submit a piece to read or sing, or have an idea for a short game that can be played on Zoom, contact Angela@recoveryinternational.org or (312) 962-5992. Please submit before November 21st.

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News from Headquarters

Because at Recovery International we try to follow in Dr. Low's footsteps and embrace his teachings of humility, we don't always speak about our accomplishments as often as perhaps we should, to keep our members informed. A few examples of what has been happening this past year.

CRF Behavioral Healthcare, a non-profit, partnered with RI after our 2024 conference in San Diego. We developed a program to train their certified peer specialists so they could run RI meetings in their mental healthcare facilities. In the past year, there have been over 170 meetings, serving over 2,000 participants.

San Diego County Behavioral Health Services also started hiring certified peer specialists. They wanted to expand their offerings for young adults, so partnered with RI to train new staff to run our teen program, *Power Your Mind*, in groups or with individuals. We have another partner in Illinois whose staff will also be trained soon to run this program with their students in their five schools.

Two new special focus groups have opened this year, *Peace with Eating* for those attentive to food/eating, and 12 Step People for those who practice RI and also attend a 12 step meeting. We are in the process of opening a third group, *Using the RI Method for Grief*, to deal with the everyday challenges and trivialities that can arise as we deal with the stress of grief and loss in our lives.

The supplemental group, *Spot Your Progress*, that focuses on personal accountability as one works toward a goal, is on hiatus for the remainder of this year, but will kick off again in January. Please keep this group in mind if you make any New Year's resolutions for 2026. (The printed *Spot Your Progress* journal is available through Amazon and the RI office.)

We have two new audiobooks coming: *Mental Health Through Will-Training*, Fifth Edition, and Dr. Low's biography, *My Dear Ones*. Look for announcements soon that they are available. We will also have the Fifth Edition available in an e-book version you can read on your device.

Remember to visit Bonfire.com and look up the Recovery International store for RI products such as t-shirts, sweatshirts and hats to share with your family and friends this holiday season. Bonfire returns a portion of their profits from each sale to RI.

This month our annual end-of-year giving campaign begins. Your generous donations are essential for the future of the organization and allow us to provide services to those who otherwise could not afford them. We are offering an appreciation gift of a 2026 desk calendar with spots from Dr. Low for gifts of \$100 or more. Please keep RI in mind as you consider your year-end giving.

We could not do any of this work without **you**: our members, volunteers, leaders, area leaders, donors, Board and committee members, and staff. Please know how truly grateful we are for your dedication and commitment to this organization, and for helping to move us all toward Better Mental Health.

Wishing each of you very Happy Holidays!



Karen G. Hall, CEO



Welcome New Board Member Evan Marcus!

Evan is a long-time friend and participant of RI. He joined his first meeting in 2000 and quickly realized that the Recovery Method can be applied to the workplace. As co-founder of DillonMarcus Consulting, a firm that specializes in executive coaching, team building and more, Evan found that many people have workplace stress. With an RI licensing agreement, he integrated the Recovery Method into the workplace. With an MA in Psychology from Antioch University, Evan's master's thesis, "Mental Preparation in Elite Athletes" explored the impact of using our mental states to enhance performance. Evan, welcome to the RI Board!



Betty Lichtenstein Celebrates her 100th Birthday

More than 40 family and RI friends assembled at a Washington, D.C. restaurant to celebrate Betty Lichtenstein's 100th birthday. Birthday wishes were read from Celinda Jungheim, Karen Hall, Sandra Glenn and many others. All the tributes at the luncheon from family and friends mentioned RI. Betty has volunteered for RI in so many capacities over more than 50 years. She has received the Phil Crane Distinguished Service award, served on the RI Board, Leader Training Committee, as an Area Leader and Group Leader, and has led over 2000 meetings! She has always been there with a warm and understanding ear. Happy Birthday, Betty!



Betty pictured with Dr. Low's daughters Phyllis Berning (left) and Marilyn Schmitt (middle).

Roaming the Globe

HOLA FROM PUERTO RICO!

Puerto Rico leaders and members have been very active over this past year. Aside from running five community meetings and three virtual meetings each week, they also do mental health outreach and member events. Here are just some of their highlights this year. Endorse for all your efforts, PR team!

Area Leader Mary Ann Santos organized a picnic at the beach, La Guancha, Ponce Puerto Rico with 11 RI members. They gathered to put the RI self-help practice into action. They shared examples and testimonials, joined the RI National Group Leaders meeting via Zoom, and distributed outreach materials while enjoying socializing in a secure, group-minded environment.



Maritza Rodriguez (left) and Teresa Jimenez attended an event for Suicide Prevention Month at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus.

Mary Ann Santos (left) and Raquel Vélez Pellicia at a conference for the group “Los Pino de Otoño.” This group was composed of senior members of the local bank cooperative. The event theme was “Training the Will - Making Wise Choices during the Golden Age.”



Pictured (from left to right): Levi S., Stacie D., David F., Maggie H., Sam Z., Andrea Z., Diana B.

LOS ANGELES, CA

RI friends gathered in downtown LA when David Fritz came for a visit. We met at a vegan restaurant for a wonderful social gathering. The picture includes most of the attendees while others came later. There is nothing like the joy of being with RI friends.

SWARTHMORE, PA

On July 8, 2015 was our first meeting at Holy Myrrh-Bearers Ukrainian Catholic Church, Swarthmore, PA. Since Covid, our meeting continued by phone and then Zoom. This Swarthmore group has increased attendance with Zoom and we just celebrated our 10th year by having a potluck get together at RI Leader Kathy Shegda's house. A fun time was had by all, and we even had a few faraway members join us by Zoom. We've met so many lovely people and we hope to continue to see our group grow even more. Endorsements to all the Swarthmore meeting members for “making a business of their mental health.” Anyone is welcome to join our meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00pm Eastern time: Meeting ID: 814 4499 8528, Passcode: 151239 or by phone: Meeting ID: 814 4499 8528, Passcode: 151239. We would love to have you!



Recovery Examples

STEP 1: My husband has declined more with memory issues lately. I had to go to work and didn't want to be late so I asked him if he would feed our little dog. He said "yes" but then he walked outside leaving me to do it.

STEP 2: My symptoms were irritability, tenseness and racing thoughts. My angry thought was "How can this be happening? He's too young for this to happen." My fearful thought was "How am I going to figure out how to get more things done so I can take care of both of us and keep working?" My disturbing impulse was to get mad at him. I didn't.

STEP 3: I spotted "Excuse and don't accuse" him or myself. Temper of any kind is a sworn enemy of mental health, but my initial reaction is average. Who would be comfortable in an uncomfortable situation, such as this? What would the average person do in this situation? I planned, decided and acted and fed the dog quickly before I left. I really endorsed myself for not making a bigger issue out of this matter.

STEP 4: Before Recovery, I would have gotten very angry at my husband and kept asking him to do something he was not able to do, not understanding that he couldn't help it. Because of the angry exchange, I would have had a lot more symptoms and it would've disrupted our marriage.

– Laurie Ruzicka

Testimonials

When I Knew RI Worked

I knew RI worked after about three weeks of attending meetings. At the time I was committed to the State Hospital, but a wonderful social worker offered RI meetings a couple times a week. I was very sick at the time and overmedicated, but the meetings made sense right away. Chatting with other residents and a nurse one day the nurse said, "Schizophrenics almost never get well." Since that was my diagnosis at the time, my feelings plummeted. I laid down on my bed very disheartened and began to think "Why should I try?" And then I thought, "What am I learning in RI?" And I remembered that the nurse said "almost." I began to think, "Maybe I can be the exception." My mood improved and I continued to work on getting well.

– Celinda Jungheim

Announcements

Mejor Salud Mental para Todas

NEW! Spanish version of Better Mental Health for Everyone

We are very grateful to Mary Ann Santos, Fedora Socarras and Marian Carbajal for the many hours they spent translating and editing the Spanish version of this workbook. We are thrilled to expand our selection of books for our Spanish community. It is available in paperback on Amazon for \$10.00.



Book Club

Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 2:00pm
Eastern time via Zoom

Topic: Averageness

Bring your coffee or decaf and settle in for a deeper dive into Dr. Low's writings. If you received an email for the previous book club session, you are on the list. Otherwise, join here: <https://www.davesdecafe.com/book-club>. You will receive a reminder email the week before. (The email will have the Zoom meeting code, no password, as well as dial-in.) Free for everyone!

Only Human

Minute by minute,
a million miracles keeping us alive.
Sights and sounds so wondrous surround.
But sensitive and wanting,
Feelings flood our brain.
Bringing a beehive of thoughts
just electrical wavelets whizzing along our nerves—
And some quite odd.

Fiery feelings, decades dead, imagination ignites.
Playing ping-pong, making an echo in our mind.
What did her look, tone of voice mean?
Rehearsing hurts sting our pride.
But our precious ego will survive.
Like an egg its shell protects
But sometimes the shell should be shed
The sense to lessen sensitivity is sensible.

Hurt feelings are beliefs not shared.
Test your beliefs—true or false?
All men are mean—global thinking.
I'll never get a good job- negative thinking.
I feel it, so it's true—internal orientation.
Feelings come and go, consequences last.
Nerves that fire together wire together,
Making habits that are good or bad.

Rumination is rum.
A fearful thought—our ticket
to the worry merry go round,
Going up and down,
Full of shoulds and coulds.
But tomorrow hasn't happened yet.
The past is gone, we have only today.

Many things are distressing, few dangerous.
Excuse don't accuse for peace of mind.
Comparing people brings envy or pride.
Self-control gives self-respect then self-confidence.

Meet the temper twins.
Resentment, indignation at others?
angry temper's his name.
Worry, disappointment with yourself?
fearful temper's her name.
Feelings should be expressed, anger suppressed.
But humor, our best friend, soothes the pain.

Anticipation is often worse than realization.
Perfection—an hallucination—not good's enemy.
Great expectations equal great
disappointments.
Endorse for the effort, not just the result.
Forgive yourself. Keep calm and carry on.
We are more than our history.
Baggage we have—just carry it well.
You are not the only one.

Hush the brain's babble with exercise and music.
Do fun things often and better with a friend.
Have goals—for now, for later.
Boundaries, physical and emotional.
keep us safe and sane.

Eeyore no more.
Mental health is a flower,
Protect, Love its aroma.
Make the negative less gloomy
the positive more bright.
Strive for cheerfulness, our duty of delight.

When will happiness come my way?
Manage your mood, the wise men say.
What is your pothole for sadness?
Fill it with gratitude,
cover with acceptance and walk away.

– William J. Boyd M.D,
paulastory@gmail.com

Is There a Cure?

Is there a cure? Can we be sure
that we are well when symptoms quell?

Using the Method of RI
we find, before our very eyes,
that change will certainly appear
in time, with effort—we can clear
the symptoms, muscles move,
spot our thoughts, and we will prove
that practicing does take us where
is cure, or close to being there.

Cure is relative, or so
thoughts tell me; I don't know
if final cure is reachable,
but getting there is teachable.
Guided by our Doctor Low,
we learn the healthy way to go.
By changing thoughts to be secure,
we grow spontaneous and sure.

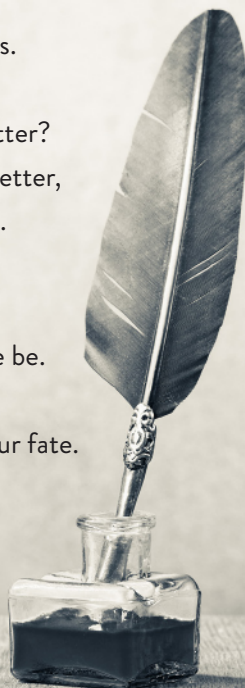
Perfection will not come to be,
at least, not consistently.
There will be moments bored or bad,
angry, fearful, startled, sad.
But life will go on more at ease,
as we'll have balance and sweet peace
when RI's Method is applied
to our tempers and feeling-lies.

A cure? We ask, what does it matter?
When we're content and feeling better,
we don't need the label 'cure'.

Rewards of RI will endure—
if we use spots faithfully,
and endorse ourselves to average be.
If we joyfully anticipate,
We lose the tenseness, and shape our fate.

And that is cure enough!

– Fran Goldstein, LA



Welcome New Life Members

In each issue, we highlight new Life Members to RI. Thank you for increasing your membership level to support our programs and help pay for others who can't afford to give.

Dale Dunlap, Topeka, KS

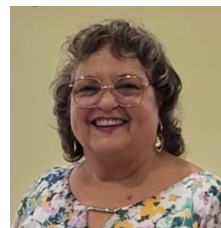
Dale, a Vietnam Veteran, has been a member for 30 years. He found Recovery International when he was going through depression in the 90's.

Favorite spot: Bear discomfort in order to gain comfort.

Mary Ann Santos, PR

Mary Ann has been attending RI meetings since 2001 and became a member a few years after that. "I now lead meetings because I know it works. Mentally, I usually review the 4-Steps and search for tools. I endorse for being average."

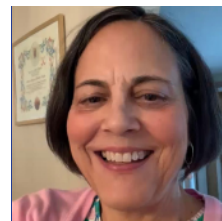
Favorite tools: "Drop the judgment," "Be objective," "Control thoughts," "Command your muscles," and "Do something to feel better, don't wait to feel better."



Claire Jordan, PA

Claire is the Assistant Group Leader for the "Peace with Eating" special focus meeting. Claire joined RI back in 2006, but her heart wasn't in it until 2016 when she began joining meetings consistently.

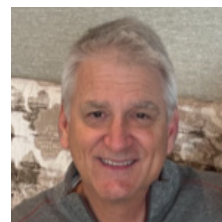
Favorite spot: "Fear is a belief and beliefs can be changed."



John Rice, CA

John is the son of Joan Rice and nephew of Treasure Rice. He learned of RI from his mom and aunt growing up, and his mom would comment that "Recovery International saved her life."

Favorite spot: "Being average is acceptable."



In Memoriam

Sharen Hansford, Houston, TX

Sharen graduated from Penn State University with a degree in Education and went on to teach in the New Orleans, LA area. A close friend said, "She was always so positive and up-lifting and had an encouraging spirit. She had a gift for making each person feel special. There was nothing she enjoyed more than meeting with her friends." Sharen was an RI member for over 25 years.



Lorraine Jackson-Fassett

Lorraine served our military as a reservist and worked for the New York Transit Authority as the first female train operator. She was promoted and worked as a supervisor until her retirement. Lorraine took Group Leader Training in 2010 and served as a Leader for the RI Telephone Groups until her retirement in 2022. Lorraine was kind and showed compassion to all the members that attended her meetings. She helped to enrich the lives of many during her years of service to RI. It was the little things in life that gave Lorraine so much joy.



Dr. Dale Marxen, Sequim, WA

Born in Wisconsin, Dale's family moved to Saskatchewan, Canada and then back to Wisconsin where he completed a bachelor's degree in math education. He worked as a CPA in Alaska and then moved to Colorado to pursue his Ph.D. in accounting, working at the University of Minnesota, Mankato. Dale was a very bright, conscientious and kind individual who grew up in a house filled with music. He was a long-time RI member.



Dr. Burton Schaffer, Vorhees, NJ

Burton graduated from Albright College Cum Laude and earned his medical degree at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital with honors. He served in the Medical Corps of the U.S. Navy as a physician. He was a nationally recognized nuclear radiologist at Booth Radiology. Dr. Schaffer lectured and published in his field. He was an RI member for the past seven years.



Natalie Ruth Silverberg, Beachwood, OH

Natalie worked as an elementary teacher prior to starting her family. After raising her daughters, she earned her master's in early childhood development from John Carroll University and worked as an educator at the Early Childhood Enrichment Center in Shaker Heights. Natalie was a former RI Area Leader and leader in the Northern Ohio area. She will be remembered for her energy and passionate dedication to Recovery.



Henry Tiffany, Montrose, NY

"Hank" graduated from Colgate University and Harvard Business School and had a long career on Wall Street in the sales and syndicate area. He was a member of the Society of Colonial Wars and the Sons of the American Revolution. In retirement, he was active in RI for over 18 years, attending meetings regularly.



Rose VanSickle, Sun City, AZ

Rose VanSickle, author of *Peace of Body, Peace of Mind* was honored for her volunteer work with RI in 2001. She established the first RI meeting in Raleigh, Winston-Salem and Southern Pines, NC. She has served on the Board of Directors, was the Area Leader for NC, SC and GA, held various positions at the national level, and was a past president in the 1990's. RI friend Linda said, "I'm heartbroken. Rose was like my soul sister, and she helped so many people." Rose was involved in RI for over 45 years, and her contributions were notable.



Steve Vincent

Steve was an active member of Recovery for over 50 years. He was a very outgoing person and had a dry sense of humor, always asking, "Are we having fun yet?" Steve was resilient through many of life's challenges. He was a Brewers, Packers, and Badgers fan and cherished his cats. He enjoyed traveling, visiting the RI San Diego team as often as possible. He loved piano bars, zoos, Spotted Cow beer, library Ready Reference, and food. Steve attended the 2024 RI San Diego conference where he joked and danced with us.





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Wisdom of Dr. Low

“Many people think of themselves as being of a superior breed, as ranking above the ‘common’ man, that is, as being exceptional. With most of them, it is merely a dream, an ambition and aspiration. They hope to be exceptional but know they are ‘nothing but average.’ In their dreams and fancies, they are romantico-intellectuals, but in actual practice, they behave as realists. Their sense of exceptionality is controlled by their knowledge of being average.”

– ***Mental Health Through Will-Training, Chapter 30 (5th edition), pg. 180***

