

Welcome to the 2022 Holiday Season!

The HOLIDAY SEASON is almost upon us!



Wow. It seems like summer just started, and here we are heading toward the holiday season! This is the time of year when many of us get overwhelmed by expectations. Some of us get frantic and try to overdo. Others shut down. Have you ever heard yourself saying, “I always get _____ during the holidays?” Why not spot the deception in thinking that you can’t change your reactions?

Preparing for the best holiday ever is about having doubts and discomfort, but using the Recovery tools to observe our deception. In many readings, Dr. Low reminds us not to interpret our thoughts in harmful ways, but to interpret them Recovery’s way (see *Manage Your Fears Manage Your Anger*, page 258). Many people repeat the same habits every year convinced that they “get depressed during the holidays.” If so, according to Dr. Low, why not recognize the deceptive thoughts that are attached to those feelings and replace them with Recovery’s concepts? (see *Feelings are not Facts*, Part 1, Chapter 9 in *Mental Health Through Will-Training*).

Spotting techniques are very powerful and can be applied during the hectic holiday season or anytime - even the most persistent negative thought patterns can change. Endorse. And keep practicing.

- Wishing you a happy, healthy Holiday Season -
Your editors, Helen and Dave

Stigma-Busting Gifts for You!

We’re trying something new this fall... member and donor premiums!
For information on how to obtain a tote bag or t-shirt, see page 6.



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News from Headquarters



“Nervous people don’t like change” is a phrase I hear often. Well, *most* people don’t like change — “nervous”

or not! It helps if we can think about it and prepare for it, which is why we announced my upcoming retirement at the Annual Meeting last May. The search is on, and the Board is interviewing a pool of talented candidates. The aim is to bring someone on with time for overlap between the two of us for training and to generally facilitate a smooth transition.

In the meantime, there is plenty to do—finishing up the new edition of *Mental*

Health Through Will-Training, starting work on a smartphone app, and raising funds to keep the organization afloat!

As a non-profit, we rely on contributions and grants to survive and keep programs going. I recently did some research on support groups. Did you know that many counselors charge anywhere from \$20-\$70 per session for participating in weekly support groups? I had no idea. And, I’m sure they are worth it. But, it shows what a “good deal” RI is—we ask \$5-\$10 as a meeting contribution from those who can afford it. We still won’t turn anyone away, but we do need to cover costs of technology, staff, printing, insurance, etc. in order to run the meetings.

Thankfully, there are many who give above and beyond meeting donations.

We have been blessed with the generosity of current donors who have pitched in to fund special projects such as developing the youth program, translating materials into Spanish, updating the website, and increasing social media outreach. All these efforts help us reach newcomers and teach the Recovery Method to others seeking help.

So decide, plan and act to support RI, support change and—of course—endorse!

Sandra K. Wilcox, CEO

A very Happy Holiday Season to our wonderful staff, leaders and ALL of our generous donors and volunteers!

Stories of Hope

RI in Japanese

My Japanese husband and I have been married since 1988. There have been a lot of challenging cultural and personality differences between us because I am a 2nd generation Japanese American. Even though I lived in Japan for over 10 years and have worked with Japanese people for nearly 40 years, our marriage has not been easy. There came a turning point last year, when my husband had a major breakdown and I had to draw the line. I said that he needed to get help.

After going through several therapists, we came across Recovery International by chance. You see, I started a nonprofit organization called “1000 Cranes for Recovery” to better serve the Asian American community. RI was highly recommended by one of my board members. We learned that the RI Method was founded by psychiatrist Abraham Low, M.D. more than 80 years ago. It is not therapy, counseling, or medical advice; rather it is a peer-led self-help group

using the RI Tools that help people think and act calmly and rationally in situations where they become overly emotional. It is similar to the evidence-based cognitive behavior therapy (CBT).

This has the potential to be culturally relevant for the Japanese population seeking ways to deal with everyday incidents that can cause stress, anxiety, depression, and anger. I was intrigued because it is a self-help group, so it is less stigmatizing. Cultural stigma is the leading cause for Asian Americans to be three times less likely to seek treatment until a major breakdown occurs.

Another reason to not seek treatment is the language barrier. So my husband and I started to form an RI subgroup in Japanese to review what was discussed at our RI sessions. We hope to be able to help RI translate materials into Japanese.

I recently invited a group of Japanese speakers to meet on Zoom. There were six of us including my husband and me. I explained the example format and showed

Recovery Examples

To spot is to know that we don't know

“ I went into the swimming pool and then received a text that a huge snake was in the pool that morning. I became worked up!

I had palpitations, air hunger, and tenseness all over. I had discomfort of having to see a snake in the pool. My angry thought was, "Why do snakes keep going in the pool!?" My fearful thought was of possibly getting hurt by the snake. My impulse was to scream after the fact.

My angry temper was that there was something wrong that snakes are able to get into the pool. I spotted that it was a startle. All I know is that I don't know why this happens. Don't dig, probe, or analyze. Drop the judgment! The snake was not aiming at me specifically. The bulk of our symptoms come from frightening beliefs. Do not let my imagination take over the reality of the situation. Worry with reflective calm and not emotional hysteria. When we see ourselves as victims we do not use our own inner resources. I commanded my muscles to write out this example. I endorsed for controlling my speech muscles.

Before my RI training, when I had no tools to use, I would have called everyone up and made it an emergency. Now I realize it was just a complication. I controlled my speech muscles and realized it was a triviality compared to my mental health! ”

Reona Z.

Recovery stands for realism, common sense and an unspoiled view of life

“ When I woke up in the morning I felt tired and didn't want to get up. This has been going on a lot lately.

I had the disturbing impulse to stay in bed. Then the thoughts came up regarding the mistakes I've made in the past and regrets of the things that I should have done and didn't do. I had tension in my shoulders and back. I had lowered feelings and a feeling of crying inside my chest.

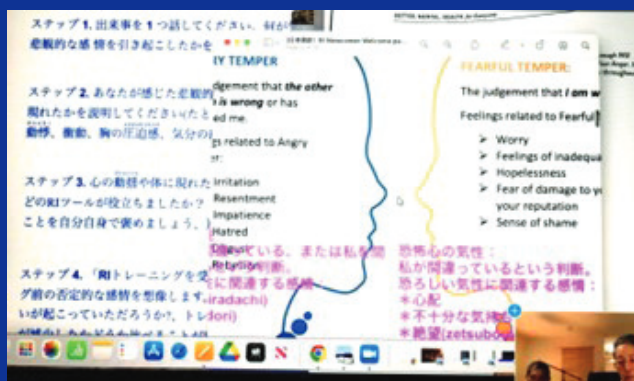
I spotted that it is sabotage to lie in bed and think these thoughts. I could move my muscles to get up. I remembered that muscles will obey commands if the command is made resolutely. I told myself I would get up no matter how tired I felt, and that those feelings of nervous fatigue are distressing but not dangerous. I could trigger spot thoughts and change them. I spotted that regrets are average and that it was fearful temper in the form of blaming myself that made me feel so bad. I spotted that the past is outer environment, and don't let outer environment reach me over the bridge of temper. I endorsed for getting out of bed. That was a toughie. I endorse myself for all the times I've practiced Recovery.

them some of the RI tools translated into Japanese. Then my husband and I gave examples, with other members reading the steps.

This is a screen shot from that Zoom. The writing on the left is the example sheet. The writing on the right is from the new workbook called *Better. Mental. Health. for Everyone*.

If you or someone you know might be interested in learning more about this effort, I would love to talk to you. Please feel free to email me.

Naomi Mizushima
1000cranesforrecovery@gmail.com



Before Recovery, I would have stayed in bed wishing that I weren't alive and I would have cried for a long time. I wouldn't have known about fearful temper and how it makes you sick. I would have believed those thoughts that I was a terrible person and I would have felt worse and worse. I could have eventually gone into the hospital.

So Grateful to Recovery!
Heather
Los Gatos, CA

Coming Soon: The Revised edition of *Mental Health Through Will-Training*!

The need for a new edition of *Mental Health Through Will-Training* has been discussed for many years. In fact, Dr. Low's daughters noted that it has been attempted several times in the past. Three years ago, we decided it was the right time to tackle it, as we also began updating other literature and developing new programs.

The original book was first published in 1950. It was written in a different era by a brilliant Polish-born, Viennese-educated neuropsychiatrist practicing in Chicago. Dr. Abraham Low's work influenced many other mental health professionals, and laid the foundation for what was soon to become known as cognitive behavioral therapy. He was also a strong proponent of people with lived experience leading by example and helping others, a concept that has now become accepted as the Peer Leader movement in the aid of therapeutic treatment.

However, the English language has evolved since the original book was written, and some of the sentence structures and phrasing in the book seem quaint or out of date. Most of the changes in the book have to do with brevity and shifts in accepted usage. For example:

"In the adult person who has achieved maturity," becomes "In the mature adult..."

"in your place of employment" becomes "at work"

Some chapters were originally based on lectures rather than articles, and minor adjustments have been made to better follow written conventions. In a few instances, we changed the names of the patients, or removed extremely old-fashioned references such as to telephone party lines and streetcars. Occasionally, full sentences or paragraphs were removed for clarity. Regardless of these, the goal was to keep the overall meaning and integrity intact.

We have also added learning aids such as Key Concepts and Tools lists at the beginning of each chapter, and Advanced Spotting at the end. These are intended to be a starting reference point for each chapter, and to help people reflect on the readings afterward. As always, we trust that readers will continue to find additional tools

and words of wisdom within the text that will be helpful to their personal journey.

We expect that our current members and meeting participants will continue to use their current books—especially if they've been marked up and favorite spots or phrases highlighted. If others start bringing the books to meetings, there will be some minor differences here and there, but the discomfort should be minimal and the message should be the same. You can even use your sense of humor if reading in a group setting: "Well, that's close to what my book says! My next paragraph starts out. . ."

This project was made possible by the help of many people, starting and ending with Phyllis Low Berning and Marilyn Low Schmitt, a team of "spot-checkers," selected long time leaders as reviewers, a dedicated copy and content editor, and numerous others. Our aim is to release the new edition in early in 2023. We hope this revised edition will help a new generation learn the Recovery Method and achieve better mental health.

CHAPTER ONE

IMAGINATION, TEMPER AND SYMPTOMS

Key Concepts:

- External and internal environment
- Sensory grasp of outer environment
- Intuitive grasp of inner environment
- Imaginative balance
- Dual and divided will

Tools:

- Imagination on fire
- Decide, plan and act
- Keep secure thoughts
- Courage to be wrong
- Face, tolerate and endure
- Do the things you fear and dread to do
- Any decision will steady you

Members Corner

Area 155 - Delaware Valley *Congratulations, Kathy!!!*

I learned about Recovery from an article in a Philadelphia newspaper. I carried the article for a long time before I decided to go to a meeting (at the urging of my Mom). I have dealt with anxiety and panic attacks on occasion from a young age. Around the age of 30, I was hit hard with depression while married and raising a young child. No one believed me when I would say "nothing caused the depression, it just happened." They would say "something had to trigger it." My first Recovery Meeting was in 1988 in Bryn Mawr, PA led by Rosemary Winters. As soon as I met the members and learned it is a "fate appointed illness," I calmed down right away. I told myself "they understand." I knew Recovery was for me. For a long time, I would carry my *Mental Health Through Will Training* book with me everywhere I went. I can't remember when I stopped carrying it.

Recovery changed my life. Learning to help myself by using

the Recovery spotting techniques and practicing them every day has made me a stronger and more outgoing person. My sense of humor has come a long way and my depression and panics are few and far between. And, I have made many good and supportive friends through Recovery.

I currently lead the Swarthmore, PA Area #155 group, and I am administrator on the official Recovery International Facebook Meeting page. Our Swarthmore, PA meeting is held on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm Eastern time via Zoom. This is a great group of people. Join us any time. We would love it!

I am now 63 years old and I believe the best is yet to come! I am so grateful for Dr. Low and RI.

Making a business of my mental health,
Kathy S., Leader
Swarthmore, PA



Roaming the Globe



Area 141 - South Central Ohio and Kentucky *It's Always a Great Time for a Picnic*

As we have for over a decade, we hosted the 2022 RI Area 141 Annual Summer Picnic in August. More than ten volunteers met on a beautiful sunny afternoon at Armco Park just west of Lebanon, Ohio, for some grilled hot dogs, hamburgers, salads, pies and lemonade!

We talked and threw Frisbee before taking a short hike on a small trail inside the park. Group Leader, Julie Smith and her spouse made a long drive up from Kentucky to join members from Dayton and Cincinnati, Ohio. Paul Hines and his spouse drove in from Buckeye Country near Columbus, Ohio.

The RI Annual Summer Picnic is hosted in appreciation of volunteers who do so much to support Recovery International.

We hope you had a nice summer. We're looking forward to the holiday season!

Scott B.



Area 131 - Suffolk County, NY *It's never too late to start a meeting*

Elizabeth B. graduated from leader training and started an in-person group at St. Joseph's Church in Ronkonkoma, NY at the age of 70. She reports, "I have an assistant leader named John. The group is run according to Recovery guidelines and the group has four to seven people a week. Recently, we even had as many as nine people! People are getting better in my group."

Endorse, Elizabeth, for moving your muscles in the service of others!

A Lasting Legacy

Suzanne Plain Walder was a Group Leader in Los Angeles for more than 45 years. She was greatly loved and admired for her patience and compassion. As Bob D. said, “Suzanne was a strict leader, but in a gentle way that was highly effective. She had a deep mastery of the method and inspired many to make a business of their mental health.”

Throughout much of her adult life, Suzanne struggled with depression. She sought treatments and counseling, and in LA she found Recovery meetings to be helpful. She became a Group Leader in the 1980s, mentoring countless others over the years.

Planning ahead, Suzanne sought to leave a legacy that would have a significant impact on future generations. When she passed away from cancer in August, 2021, she left most of her estate to Recovery International.



This substantial gift will support programs to serve thousands of people far into the future. Our regular meetings, leader training, youth program, Veterans Initiative—all will benefit from Suzanne’s thoughtfulness and generosity!

If you would like to make a bequest to support RI, simply contact your attorney or Sandra Wilcoxon, CEO, at swilcoxon@recoveryinternational.org for sample language and more information.

Stigma-Busting Gifts for You!

We’re trying something new this fall...member and donor premiums! These serve two purposes. First, we want to thank you for your support with a small token of appreciation. Second, by using the tote bag or wearing the t-shirt, you let others know that you support programs for better mental health, which helps eliminate the stigma and might start a conversation.



- For new and renewing members
- For lower-level Annual Fund Gifts



- For higher-level Annual Fund Gifts

(Already have enough tote bags & t-shirts? Simply opt out of receiving the gift!)

Announcements

Book Study

We will keep you posted for the next resourceful boost for your mental health! SPOT LIKE A BOSS is an on-going exploration of the powerful spotting practice for changing habits as taught by Dr. Low to the original members of Recovery.

Stay tuned for the announcement of the next book study in the Weekly Wisdom and in the Winter 2023 Recovery Reporter.

If you DIDN'T receive an email for the last Book Study, or if you are new and would like to attend, please send an email to davesdecafe@gmail.com

New RI Website has Launched!

Recovery International's Website is new and improved! We redesigned the site to allow for easier navigation, to make pages more interactive, to give visitors a call to action, and to allow people to find and join meetings easier. The Spanish page is more robust and links to meetings in Spanish are now easy to find. We added many new videos and testimonials pulled from social media. There's even a way to add your review right on the website. Check it out, find a meeting, and write a review at recoveryinternational.org



Holiday Variety Show! December 11, 6:00-8:00 pm Eastern

Please join us for our third virtual Holiday Sing-a-Long and Variety Show -- RI style, as we showcase members and their creativity!

If you want to get on the program agenda with an RI related song, poem, or story (for about 3 minutes), please e-mail Kelly at kellyeokeefe@gmail.com by December 1st. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Last year's event was fun and entertaining and filled with laughs! We hope you can join us this year.

Any RI member is welcome to attend.

Special Sessions are a Hit!

Thank you to those leaders and members who have put in the extra effort to facilitate continuing education sessions for us. So far this year, we held 19 sessions with nearly 250 participants! Among the topics offered were Spotting Sabotage, Making Art with RI Spots, Understanding RI Concepts, Opening a Meeting, Marketing RI, and Group Leader and Power Your Mind leader trainings. If you would like to suggest a special session topic, please email angela@recoveryinternational.org.

See even more stories in
our online edition!

<<IMB>>

<<SK>> - <<PK>>

<<PRSRT>>

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<<Addressee>>

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Call for Submissions!

Have you or someone you know dedicated 25 or more years to practicing the RI Method? Help us honor longtime members as we feature our long-serving heroes in each issue of the Reporter.

Please also submit your Stories of Hope, Examples and local news for Roaming the Globe for the next Reporter. Send us:

- Photos from Area events
- What challenge/problem did RI solve for you?
- What are your favorite spots?
- Why would you recommend RI?

Send to:
editor@recoveryinternational.org

Mailed items should be sent to:
Recovery International
1415 W. 22nd St., Tower Floor
Oak Brook IL 60523

Wisdom of Dr. Low

Decision to bear Discomfort

On our way to church one Sunday, my husband told me he would have to stay after the services to attend a meeting. I instantly became angry. I told him he should have let me know about the meeting earlier as I had a roast, with potatoes in the oven and had asked our daughter and her husband to come for dinner promptly at 12:30.

My husband suggested that I drive the car home. He said that he would come home with one of the other members of the congregation. To this I replied, in temper, "but you know how I hate to drive in heavy traffic."

At this point we were about to enter the church so our discussion was terminated. After we had taken our seats I noticed that I had symptoms - hand tremors, preoccupation, and I felt very self-conscious. Realizing that I had been indulging in temper, I made up my mind that I would solidly reject the idea that my husband was wrong for not informing me earlier about the meeting. I decided that I would "bear the discomfort" of driving home alone and of keeping my husband's dinner warm for him until he arrived.

Within a few minutes after I decided to discard my temper the symptoms left and I was able to appreciate the services. Before Recovery I would have vacillated back and forth between blaming my husband and not blaming him and the symptoms would have gone on and on.

Dr. Low's Comment: None because the example speaks for itself. It is to the point, brief and well modeled after the official pattern.

From *Selections from Dr. Low's Works*, page 119