

New habits for a new year!

Welcome to the new year and welcome to a brand new list of resolutions. If you're like most of us, resolutions might be a sticky subject and that's precisely the point! According to some estimates, less than 10% of people actually stick to their resolutions each year, yet people continue to set goals with high hopes of a better year ahead.

Whether we want to take a trip, start an exercise regime, organize our home or achieve anything else in 2022, it's all about sticking to our goals. And sticking to our goals means forming new habits! It's important to make resolutions that have a deep importance to us, and keeping our mental health a priority is on the top of that list.



So how can we actually set ourselves up for success and keep calm and resolute as well? Well that is quite a personal choice. Choice is the gift we get from working the tools of the RI program. We're a diverse lot but our common denominator is Dr. Low's method. Whether we have small or large goals, RI is a tried and true resource to help us form new habits to achieve our goals and lead calmer and more productive lives.

"If I don't establish new habits in him, then how can he get well? How can he acquire, then, the habits that he needs? And if a patient merely accepts what I tell him and goes ahead and applies the methods which I tell him to practice, if he does that once or twice, then he doesn't establish habit. Everything that is done a few times is no habit yet. And without habits, he will continually fall back into his old ways, and the old ways are not good. His old ways are not good." — *Manage Your Fears, Manage Your Anger* lecture 35 page 212, FRUSTRATIONS, TRAINING AND HABITS

—Wishing you a happy, healthy NEW YEAR

Your editors, Helen and Dave

Recovery Examples

Spotting and Muscle Control

“ Sunday morning when I woke up I noticed that a feeling of fatigue was immediately with me. Another symptom that I had was lack of appetite. With no desire to eat anything and a feeling of being all in I thought I'd just lie in bed a while. Then the thought struck me—this is sabotage! So, I jumped out of bed and dressed, forced myself to eat breakfast and then went over and picked up my book *Mental Health Through Will Training*, and read the topic 'Will, Beliefs and Muscles' for our afternoon branch meeting.

Before I had finished reading the chapter, my feeling of being all in had left. Prior to my RI training, I used to give in to my symptoms and go back to bed. Now I force myself to bear discomfort and, I might add, I am working regularly.”

From *Selections from Dr. Low's Works*, page 112

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News from Headquarters



Looking back at the past year, I am so grateful to all our leaders, members, donors, board and staff for your support and commitment to Recovery’s mission during a very challenging year!

We appreciate all the group leaders who are starting to re-open in-person meetings, all the leaders who are running Zoom, telephone and chat meetings, all the area leaders who assist and mentor their group leaders. And we can’t forget the volunteers who work on committees or special projects, coordinate events, promote RI meetings, help run the Facebook meeting page, edit the Reporter, and serve on the board.

People who give of their time, and people who become members or make contributions are all essential to sharing the gift of better mental health with others! Thank you for your part in supporting our mission and teaching Dr. Low’s method to those who need it.

Endorse, and wishing you all the best in the new year!

Sandra K. Wilcoxon

Sandra K. Wilcoxon, CEO

Thank you staff, volunteers, leaders and generous donors for all your support!!



Veteran’s Initiative

Honor Flight San Diego and RI Area 25 work together to honor US Veterans

In early October, Recovery International Area 25 San Diego was proud to work with a non-profit organization called Honor Flight San Diego at the San Diego International Airport. Honor Flight San Diego coordinates to fly US military veterans from San Diego to Washington, DC and back home over a long weekend at no cost to them, while showing them some memorials and landmarks in Washington, DC. Nearly 800 attendees showed up at the San Diego airport to greet the veterans as RI volunteers welcomed and thanked them for their years of service, the commitment they make to military life and for serving the USA with respect while on duty. RI volunteers handed out over one hundred American flags to the attendees. Interviews by San Diego TV news affiliate ABCNews10 granted visibility to RI. VFW District 1 San Diego Commander Parks met Lisa G. and Scott B., and promised to support Recovery International’s Veterans Program.

We are grateful to Holly Shaffner at Honor Flight San Diego for making the RI folks feel comfortable throughout the event! Look for more Honor Flight/RI events in the future!



Jeff B., Debbie N., Judi B., Lisa G.



Judi B., Scott B., Lisa G., Sharon L.

A word to my fellow Veterans: "I’m a man and I can take care of my own self."

I joined Recovery International in 1990 and the reason I started going to Recovery’s self-help group meetings had nothing to do with my military service going back to the early 1960s. There were other factors that led to my feelings of anxiety and depression. They were: my former job as an ironworker, the death of both my parents in a short period of time and a few others. But, you know what? Whatever it was, it just simply happened and it happened to me. Of course it would have been helpful to know what to do as these things were happening, but I just didn’t know. And this is where the Recovery Method comes in.

Had I known the Recovery Method before my breakdown, there’s a good chance I wouldn’t have had the breakdown.

In 1990, I had gone to a mental health therapist and soon after to a psychiatrist and was put on medication and started feeling somewhat better, but I felt I needed more. While continuing therapy, I soon found out about Recovery International from a cousin of mine who said, “It was the best thing that ever happened to me out of all the doctors, therapists and medication I have taken.” After taking my cousin’s advice, I attended my first Recovery meeting. I soon realized I was now on my road to recovery. It’s been a lifetime love affair for me, for my friends in Recovery, and to many people who attend the Recovery meetings throughout the USA and other countries, as well.

What’s great about Recovery is that you learn a method and you put it into practice little by little until it becomes a natural part of your life each and every day of your life.

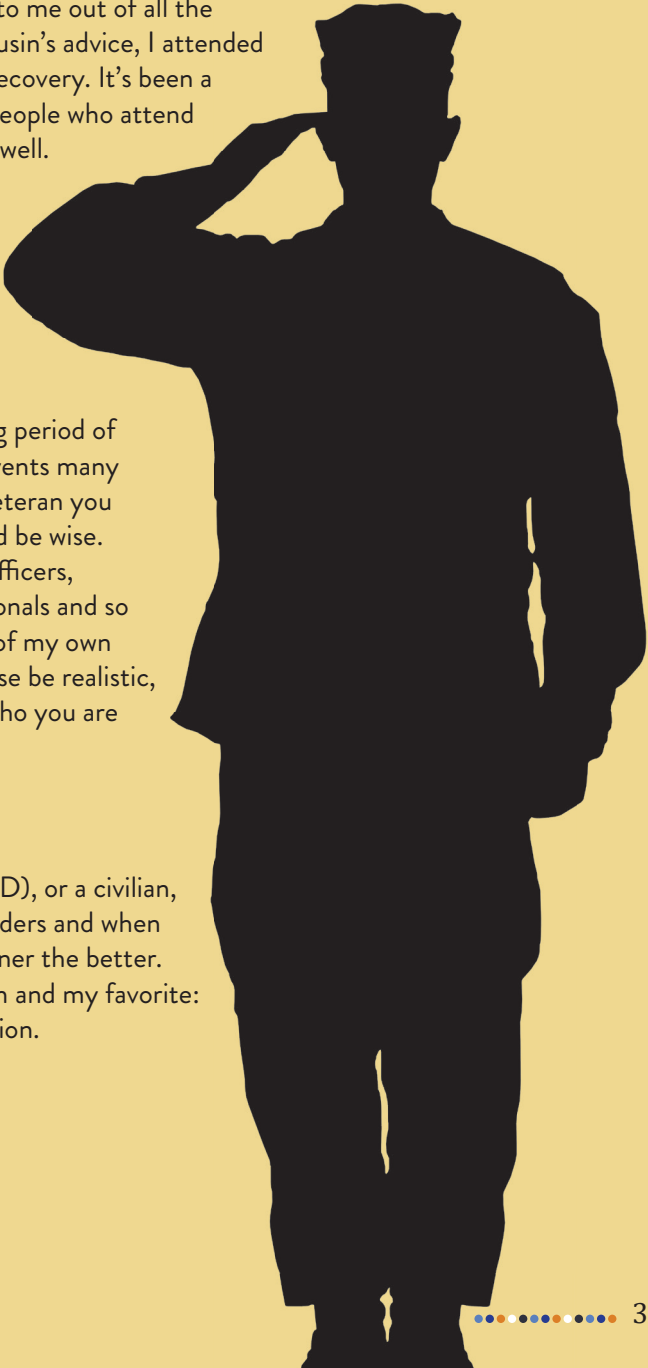
A word to my fellow veterans:

Whether you’ve served during peacetime or in war, for a short or long period of time, it really doesn’t matter. The stigma of mental health issues prevents many people from receiving the help they truly need. You may think as a veteran you should be able to handle life’s everyday problems, well think again and be wise. Besides veterans, there are many people who think this way: police officers, construction workers (ironworkers such as myself), doctors, professionals and so on. Simply being a male for instance; “I’m a man and I can take care of my own self.” If you have any thoughts such as what I’ve just mentioned, please be realistic, because mental health issues can attack anyone and it doesn’t care who you are and how tough you are.

Final thought:

Whether a veteran dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or a civilian, male or female, many of the stresses in life can fall on anyone’s shoulders and when it does, don’t be a fool, macho or whatever. Just get help and the sooner the better. The sources are out there: doctors, therapists, counselors, medication and my favorite: Recovery International, a peer-led, self-help mental health organization.

Army (Infantry) Veteran from Area #130 NYC



India

The Reporter interviewed Anil Vartek, PhD, the founder of the Recovery group in Pune, India, which currently has about 20-30 members. He recently spoke at the Be Kind to Your Mind webinar. His presentation was titled “Demand and Supply Gap in Mental Health.” He talked about how mental health is ignored in the government budget. But in every problem, there is an opportunity. The members of the Recovery group have formed the Ekalavya Foundation for Mental Health. Ekalavya was a legendary character who was famous for being self-taught. The legend of Ekalavya has inspired a principle of self-learning called Ekalavya-ism. This translates in Dr. Low’s language as self-leadership.

The members of the board of directors are active meeting participants, some of whom have appeared in the Reporter. The objectives are to focus on awareness, support groups and stigma removal. This October, they received a certificate as a registered nongovernmental charitable organization.

Congratulations and endorse!

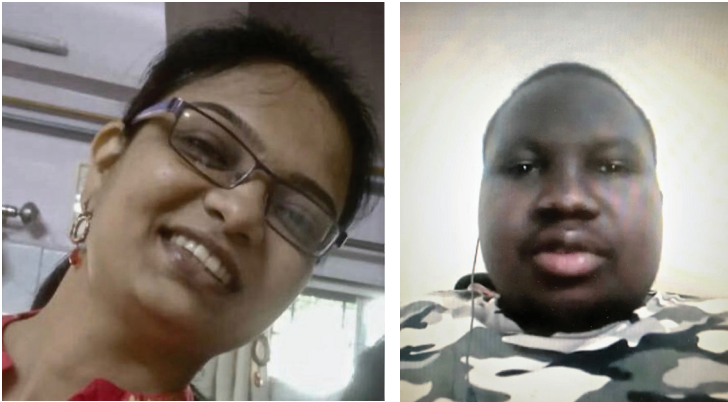


It's a small world

Pallavi, from India, has become a WhatsApp buddy with Dickson, from Uganda. They have been sharing their experiences and thoughts in a busy conversation.

Dickson said that it is a good experience. Pallavi wrote, "While speaking to a person from another country, we collapse all our doubts about being substandard. We find common opinions, ambitions and ways out to reach it. We share common problems and can help each other to fight through it. That helps to understand the same psychology people of other countries have. That settles our low self-esteem."

Please send your endorsements and some of your favorite spots to these two new apprentices to editor@recoveryinternational.org



Area 25

How lucky Recovery International was to have Scott Bushbaum visit us from Area 141, in Dayton, Ohio. Scott is not only an assistant area leader, but he is an outreach committee member through the RI Veteran’s Initiative. Knowing there would be almost a thousand people at the San Diego Airport, Scott had the idea that this would be a great place to share Recovery International. We all wore our red, white, and blue Recovery t-shirts and many of the major media outlets interviewed us. Veteran’s brochures were handed out, and we all had the opportunity to wave the American flags.

To kick off the celebration for veterans returning home, Karen and Jim Crawford hosted an open house barbeque so that Scott could meet leaders and members in San Diego.

We didn’t know how emotional the next day would be when we greeted 84 veterans and their companions, ages 84-104. Scott, thank you. Let’s do it again across the country!

Lisa G., San Diego, CA – Area 25



Party Hosts Karen and Jim C. Scott B., Mike R., Jack N.



Leaders and members of Area 25

In Memoriam



Phyllis Cavaliere Young
1954-2021
Area 25 San Diego

Phyllis is remembered by her dear friends as being “a gem with a good heart and loving spirit.”



Alice Berwert
1931-2021
Area 25 San Diego

Alice was an inspiration to everyone she met. Her smile and laughter brightened anyone’s day.



Suzanne Walder
Area 15 Los Angeles

Suzanne led an RI group for over 45 years and was greatly loved and admired. She had a deep mastery of the method and inspired many to make a business of their mental health.



Barbara Anne Ryan
1941-2021
Area 155 Pennsylvania

Barbara always had a smile on her face and her laugh was contagious. She supported RI members and was always available for 5-minute phone calls. In her words, “Keep on keepin’ on.”

San Francisco Bay



Area 20

Some of our area members have adopted the practice of motionless sitting, which Dr. Low discusses in *Manage Your Fears, Manage Your Anger* (pages 289 and 253). This has helped to create a more relaxed atmosphere. Many were unaware of this practice, which Dr. Low said would steady the body, giving “instant relief which at first is brief, but then lengthens and lengthens and produces a real sustained relief.”



NEW YORK
Area 133

Together again! Leaders and members in Area 133 NY (pictured below) met in person for the first time in 18 months in White Plains, NY. We dined outside and enjoyed 80 degree weather. The mood was festive and hopeful. Another fall gathering was held in Paterson, NY, for our Brewster group.



Members Corner



My muscles give me more than expected

Learning about leadership and muscles (*Manage Your Fears, Manage Your Anger*, lecture 20) was a path breaking experience for me. Because of the explanation, I realized I was doing the exact opposite. I was confusing my muscles every now and then. So, they were not obeying my commands in spite of ordering them to. Now, I realize the importance of clear thinking and commanding the muscles clean. It's a gift if you get to give clear instructions to your muscles; they respond beautifully. You get surprised what wonders it brings to you. I am so happy that today my muscles give me more than expected. It's an electric reaction. In no time, you see the result without your brain having to effort it out. There is not too much thinking, deliberation, over-carefulness required to do a particular task. Your muscles become honest and give you what you want, without any lethargy, tiredness and consequent dejection of no response.

Pallavi G., Pune India

The Inner Smile Yields Inner Wealth

If the inner smile can be there while you have a temper flare,
Your response can come with culture 'cause the anger you will bear.
(Call the inner feeling ridiculous and vow you'll have no more of this!)

If you spot and wear the mask, and give no sign of inner angst,
You'll enrich your mental health and show the world a neutral face.
"Do you wanna be right?" asks Dr. Low, "or rather be well?" you ask yourself.
Reject symbolic victory to secure your inner health.
Let temper go for inner peace, and smile at the anger and fear.
Then endorse yourself for effort made, and enhance your inner wealth.

Fran G., New Orleans, LA

Between the mortal boundaries
of our first day and death,
may we cherish every moment
and be thankful for each breath.

Let us face our diverse destinies
with courage, mirth and reason,
and embrace our ever changing world
as season close to season:

To sense the fragrant air of spring
upon a rain in May;
to taste an ice cold lemonade
on a sizzling summer's day;
to see a swirling saffron leave
as it falls to the forest floor;
to feel the fury of the wintry wave
as it pounds upon the shore...

For tomorrow's a curiosity
and yesterday, but dust
Shall we share the sage philosophy
of peace, love, hope, and trust.

Fred G.

Stories of Hope

With practice, I am seeing that when symptoms arise, I have a choice

Recovery International is helping me heal from a traumatic experience. In 2009-2011, I attended RI in San Diego and Los Angeles but then moved to an area that did not have in-person meetings. In October 2020, my 41-year-old husband had a stroke which changed my life. By January 2021, I started having panic attacks.

Since June, I have worked on my mental health with determination. The beginning was difficult as I navigated through frequent and nervous symptoms and panic experiences. Frequently, I would hear in meetings that after several months of RI, more tools would be acquired to handle my symptoms more effectively. I have been practicing RI for 5 months now and I can see the difference in handling my symptoms. My PTSD symptoms have improved and when something specific to my husband's stroke comes up, such as a bill or specific reminder of the changes that have happened in my family, my nervous system is less confused about time and I realize that my trauma is in the past and is not happening at this time.

I still have continued recovery ahead. I am working on changing my thoughts and beliefs and this is helping my nervous system recover. I am changing my judgement of right and wrong and that is helping me to accept my symptoms and improve relationships in my life. As I continue to practice, I am seeing that when symptoms arise, I have a choice. I can choose to bear discomfort and I can choose the attitude I will take towards symptoms or situations. This allows me to practice the muscle method part of the program and command my will. Slowly, I am gaining confidence and restoring my mental health. I also see that because of my experiences and the tools that I have learned from RI, I am stronger than I was before my husband's stroke.

Christina, University Place, WA

Stories of Hope Audio Series

From self-leadership to meeting leadership

From self-leadership to meeting leadership
To watch Dickson from Kampala, Uganda share how he is using the RI method and how Dr. Low's teachings brought him relief from panics and sleeplessness, enter: <https://bit.ly/3FwHNIS> into your browser. Now Dickson is learning to be self-led by studying Dr. Low's writings and giving examples at Zoom meetings. His goal is to become a meeting leader in Uganda to pay forward what he has received from the Recovery Method.

We also have other video interviews with members and special guests on Dave's Decafe.

The new year brings
HOPE



BOOK STUDY!!

In our last Book Study, we continued on the topic of habits. We will elaborate on some of those topics and show how our daily practice can be reinforced to truly achieve success in whatever we have planned.

Sign up at davesdecafe@gmail.com to receive information on the next date and time. If you received an email for the last Book Study, don't worry you're still on the list. You will receive a reminder email the week before.

Details to be announced!!



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See even more stories in
our online edition!

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. Send us:

- A photo
- What challenge/problem did RI solve for you?
- What are your favorite spots?
- Why would you recommend RI?
- Highlight the meeting you attend
- Include city, day and time of your meeting

Send to:
editor@recoveryinternational.org

Mailed items should be sent to:
Recovery International
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Oak Brook IL 60523

ALL Members! Please submit area news, group photos, poems, and musings celebrating how RI has made a difference in your everyday life.

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Wisdom of Dr. Low

Seeking goals and reaching goals

"But if you plan, then you plan something that can be expressed in terms of seeking a goal or reaching a goal. You plan to reach a goal, to accomplish reaching it. And that's what you call accomplishing, to set out for a goal and reach it. That's the only kind of accomplishment, I think, we know in life. This accomplishing is done by the human being. Everything else happens to him. But this is done, this seeking for goals and reaching goals.

And if I want to reach goals, I have to employ means for reaching them. The means lead to the goals. ...

So, will you understand that the patient, the nervous patient, is an individual that can plan, and reach his goals, and choose his means exactly like anybody else. He's not mentally disturbed; he's only nervously handicapped. But when he plans and when he sets out to accomplish what he plans, then his own body may interfere at any time, in any intensity. And that's what makes the patient's, the nervous patient's, life such an ordeal, almost a nightmare. And I think it is a nightmare for most patients.

And you see, you must, in order to reach your goals in ordinary life and to employ the proper means, you must eliminate the disturbances of your own body. And that requires training.

And I only wanted to set the problem before you without going into any deeper discussion. I want to tell you that the purpose of this organization is not to teach the patient how to be smart and clever and efficient. Not at all. The patient is clever, as clever as people are. He is efficient, as efficient as average people are, and perhaps more - or less. I don't know. But the patient must be rid of the handicap of his symptoms - this means of his own body and his own mind interfering with his choice of goals and the choice of means."

From *Manage Your Fears, Manage Your Anger*, pages 340-341