

Welcome To WINTER 2023 -The Will Is The Power To Choose

Make each day in the new year an opportunity to remind ourselves that we can change our thoughts at any time!

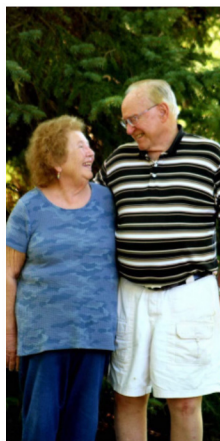
Sabotaging thought patterns, particularly when they've become habitual, can be hard to break. Patterns that have been in place for years can take time to change. Being patient with ourselves and practicing Dr. Low's method is a lifetime commitment and it starts with paying attention to the things you say to yourself every day. Although it will take time and practice, eventually, those self-defeating thoughts will become less and less frequent.

Perfection is a hope, dream, and illusion. A little progress, no matter how small, is still progress. Endorse and Happy New Year!

Wishing you a happy, healthy NEW YEAR
Your editors, Helen and Dave



The 2023 Winter Reporter issue is dedicated to Joanne Lampey



Joanne Lampey, RI's Board President, passed away last November after a long illness. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her family as they cope with this loss. Over several decades Joanne served as group leader and area leader and then joined the Board of Directors of Recovery International. After she was elected as Board President, she guided the organization through many changes and challenges with an eye to bringing new resources, adapting to new technology and outreach to new participants.

Her leadership and devotion to RI will be greatly missed, especially by those of us who worked closely with her these past several years.

Pictured: Joanne and her beloved late husband, Fred, who also contributed to RI with his infectious laugh and musical talents (he played a mean accordion). We will miss you, Joanne.



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News from Headquarters



As I prepare for retirement and look back at my tenure here, I am pleased and proud of all the accomplishments that we as a team have achieved. And I mean the whole RI team including the Board, area and group leaders, staff, volunteers, members and donors. The biggest challenge was dealing with COVID; closing community meetings and opening new online and phone meetings. We've come out on the other side of it stronger and with more meetings that people can access from all over the country. But, there

is nothing like an in-person meeting for building relationships and supporting each other, so I hope that we continue to open more community meetings in the future.

Other accomplishments we made together include:

- Monthly calls and continuing education programs to better support leaders,
- Increased grants, contributions and membership to support programs,
- Updated brochures including the Veterans Initiative, Spanish materials, a Professionals briefing, and Seven Keys to a Better Life,
- Revamped the youth program as *Power Your Mind: Tools to Build Resilience*,
- Put our books on Amazon and are selling to new audiences,
- Published the *Nature Journal* and *Better. Mental. Health. for Everyone*,
- Updated the website and working on an app,
- Increased number of presentations at regional and national conferences,
- Revised edition of *Mental Health Through Will Training* is nearly complete.

Despite occasional 'bumps in the road,' RI is stronger now than it was six years ago, and we need to keep momentum going to better serve a new generation. Mental health challenges are being talked about more than ever, yet most people have never heard of Recovery International as a possible aid. This will be the mission going forward, to continue to spread the word and let others know what we know: The Recovery Method works. We've helped people for 85 years, and RI is stable and positioned to keep going long into the future!

It's been a pleasure working with all of you. Thank you for your continuous support. I know the new leadership will succeed in taking RI to the next level.

Happy New Year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sandra K. Wilcoxon". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sandra K. Wilcoxon, CEO

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

Welcome, Karen Hall

The Board of Directors of Recovery International is pleased to announce the appointment of Karen Hall as CEO, effective January 9, 2023. Hall brings more than twenty years of nonprofit experience with cultural/historical organizations and running programs at universities with a focus on women's issues, which included mental health components. She has served as a volunteer with several intervention centers and has trained peer counselors and support group facilitators. As the Director of Women's Resource Office at Purdue University, she partnered with the Department of Psychology to present programs on dealing with depression, and also partnered with the local NAMI chapter to bring speakers to campus. She is an accomplished speaker and presenter on a variety of topics including reducing fear and anxiety, mindfulness, and volunteerism. Throughout her career, including her most recent post as the director of the Glen Ellyn Historical Society in Illinois, she gained broad experience in all areas of running a nonprofit organization including fiscal management, fundraising, administration, human resources, board relations, external relations and marketing. Her unique set of skills will be an asset to Recovery's future. Sandra Wilcoxon will serve as CEO Emeritus through the end of January to facilitate a smooth transition.

Recovery Examples

Why

“The phone rang, I felt irritated. A TV show was on and I missed something that was said, I felt irritated. Then my boyfriend called out to me from another room, and I felt irritated. I realized I was worked up.

I felt irritable. Angry thought: “I don’t like anything, I don’t want anything, too much is happening!” Fearful thought: “Something is wrong with me, and I don’t know why.” Jaw felt tense, body felt stiff, and I felt hurried.

I spotted that it’s average to feel irritable sometimes. I put in the secure thought that it is not important to know why. I moved my muscles to do yoga, which was good objectivity. I recognized this as a minor setback because I am busy and productive these days. And thus, it is really a step-forward because I am now applying my Recovery tools to an old insecure emotional habit I used to get stuck in: wondering “why.” I endorsed for taking the danger out of not knowing “why,” for moving my muscles, and not going into lowered feelings.

Before my Recovery training, I would have taken it seriously, gone into lowered feelings, and cried.

Fran G., New Orleans

”

Control of speech muscles

“This is a testimonial to my RI practice.

I decided to get my brother-in-law a pizza for his birthday lunch, which was on a Monday when many restaurants are closed. My first two choices were both closed, so I had to find another place.

When I went to the place (not one of my original choices) to pick up the food, I had an impulse to say, “Wow, it’s good you are open, a lot of places are closed on Mondays.” When you think about it, this would have been an insult because I would be saying, “Now I’m stuck coming here since the other places were closed on Mondays.” But because of my RI training, I held my speech muscles.

Before RI, I would not have controlled myself.

Thank you to RI. For the most part, I have learned to hold my speech muscles when needed as well use them when needed. Of course, as an average person.

Cindy E.

”

Stories of Hope

Gratitude

I have known Dr. Low’s method since I was 22 years old and I will be 71 next month. I have been practicing Recovery for a long, long time and it really works. I am having problems in my life right now, and I have never coped so well. I am really endorsing myself. I have not had much angry temper at all and not flaring up with my temper.

I am also leading a Recovery Group in person in Ronkonkoma, NY every Friday. There is so much to be endorsed here. And Recovery has really helped me more than anything else I have done in my life for my mental health.

Elizabeth B., area 131

Roaming the Globe



India

Pune - Spring blossoms

The Recovery group in India by Eklavya Foundation for Mental Health in Pune has introduced two separate and one combined meeting for caregivers and patients. We have also introduced 5 minute phone calls in India along with doing examples between meetings using WhatsApp chat.

The group in India also has a bimonthly newsletter and recently celebrated the first anniversary of its foundation. An interesting project started by the group is publication of a compilation of poetry by the name Bahar (spring blossoms). Fifteen poems were published. All of these are written by our group members. (See below.)

Psychology students at CP College in Pune (where Dr. Anil Vartek taught before retiring) publish the print version of the newsletter. It's a group effort!

Chinmay P.
Pune, India



Chennai - All journeys begin with a single step

Twenty five years ago, I attempted to set up a self-help group in Chennai and failed miserably. It was not until the Covid pandemic that I found answers. Technology now enables persons to be free of geographical location, and all that is needed is only a convenient time to meet.

However, that proved to be only a platform. I was stuck with finding persons who would willingly participate. It was then that Manjiri gave a simple solution to get started. No advertising, no social media posts, and no professional endorsement. He asked me to reach out to people I knew. This proved an excellent way to start. Although we are just beginning, the first step has been taken.

Participation is getting better. Hopefully, the support group will flourish and be helpful to more numbers in the times to come.

Ganesh R.
Chennai, India

Pictured: (clockwise)
Manjiri D.,
Smita G.,
Dr. Anil Vartek,
Ganesh R.



No more a victim

Victimhood happens in response to someone's evil
That episode is not fair to either in the sequel
You don't have a right to poke flower's petal
It leaves it crushed in heart and that's brutal.

The one who pokes is utterly provocative
It shows he is brought up much insensitive
Life is all about actions being thoughtful
Knee jerk living is a story of childhood.

Even the puppy world lives in a group
Moving around with others being hooked
Not even animals play it so crooked
Better behave sensible, it gives your estimate.

And to the little petal that's so innocent
"Detach the part that has got swollen
Don't you calculate what you have lost
Make efforts for the remains that lasts."

Don't you compare the chopped stub with a tree
What sprouts on it, is a story to each
A tree may be for children to take inspiration
But the stub shares the maturity that's awesome.

So, the flower-petal need not think what's lost
It's the new buds that inspire people at any cost
Then why brood over the freckled stage of our lives
It speaks of our experience and it's might.

In the end, what matters is your positivity
The rainbow has seven colors of infectivity
You are smitten only by your own productivity
Feel 'no more a victim', that's not your destiny.

Dr. Pallavi G.



Area 20 - Northern California

Christine DeClue is a longtime member of RI. She completed her Group Leader Training course in March 2021. She has been attending the Walnut Creek Saturday 2PM online meeting, leading examples and otherwise being a valued member of the group. She agreed to become an assistant leader and was approved by the area team.

Harry, the co-leader of the meeting, has this to say about Christie: Christie joined our Zoom meeting a year or so ago. She is retired and living in Bakersfield, CA, but keeps busy with various social activities. She told me she had been an RI devotee for some time, but had lost touch during the Covid diaspora. I was very impressed with her spotting skills and her ability to go beyond mere recitation to a true feel for meaning of the words Dr. Low gave us all. It's good to have Christie on board.

Endorse, Christie for your contribution to Area 20 and RI!

Canada

Recovery Canada 2022 Annual Leadership Conference

This September, several Recovery Canada group leaders were able to meet for an in-person Leadership conference. There was much excitement about meeting at the annual conference after missing out the last two years. Leaders from many provinces met together in London, Ontario, on September 23 and 24th, 2022. Training, insight, leader support, gratitude, updates, encouragement, and fellowship were shared amongst all the attendees.

During the conference, Joyce Oliver's service achievements were recognized and celebrated with words of appreciation – and balloons and cake! - from our Recovery Canada leadership team.

Pictured: (from left to right): Bob T., Kathy F., Betty S. (in back), Cindy H., Joyce Oliver, Donna M., Stella H., Naomi B. (in back), Jean F. (in front), Laura C.



Area 141 - South-Central Ohio and Kentucky

On a bright, breezy, sunny Sunday afternoon in mid-October, Recovery International joined again with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention at Don Crawford Plaza for the Out of the Darkness Miami Valley Community 5k Walk 2022. Recovery International has been a part the Out of the Darkness Miami Valley Community Walk for over a decade now. We are glad for the chance to share Dr. Low's Four Step Method with people who learn to spot on angry and fearful temper for better mental health.

Scott B.
Assistant Area Leader
Veterans Program Committee member



Area 15 – Greater Los Angeles

The Greater Los Angeles area tiptoed back to an in-person picnic on Saturday, October 22nd with an informal picnic, lots of fun mutual aid, and RI games and a raffle. It was so nice to see people in person instead of just their Zoom box. We vowed to do more next year. The only drawback is that our geographic area is so large that not everyone is able to join us.



Area 145 - Northern Ohio

The Youngstown, Ohio, Recovery group supported the NAMI Mahoning Valley walk, Saturday, October 8. The walk highlighted mental health resources in the Mahoning Valley. Group leader Margaret Floyd hosted a table to get the word out about RI.



Members Corner

Thank you, Dolores!!

I would like to give recognition and thanks to Dolores G. for her 40+ years of service and devotion to the Recovery Program. She was a leader for 20 years in northern New Jersey until she moved to Toms River, NJ and opened up the Wednesday night meeting that still remains open today. Prior to retiring from her leadership, Dolores was also Area Leader for Area 125. Throughout these years, she has helped many people regain their mental health and help them lead better lives because of learning and working the program. She still continues to be a liaison as well as a mentor and a friend to the countless numbers of people she has helped throughout the years. For this we are truly grateful!



Oh Recovery

Oh Recovery, where would I be without you? I found you in my darkest hour and your method taught me peace over power when temper was my middle name.

Oh Recovery, you called me to the basement of St. Michael's church where I would meet others who understood and together we bore the discomfort.

Oh Recovery, who knew words from Abraham Low would still continue to grow in our minds and spread across the globe from Chicago to Ireland.

Oh Recovery, I am your humble apprentice and even miles away from my group, you connect through Zoom and I'm still in the loop!

Oh Recovery, holiday time is near but for some of us that are alone it's hard to find the cheer. Thankfully, we have your gift of fellowship to fill in the gaps which helps to remind us feelings aren't facts.

Happy New Year, RI Family!
Yaz H.

In Memoriam

Dr. Joe Raffa, Area 25 (San Diego)

Area 25 Recovery International members gathered for dinner on October 23rd to honor, celebrate and remember long time Recovery International member, Dr. Joe Raffa. Jack N. led the group in very moving remembrance of Joe, and all the other Area 25 RI members, that have recently passed. The stories of Joe's influence on us continued into the evening and reminded us all that it is not only our mental health that we gain by joining Recovery International but also deep and lasting friendships as well.



Laurent Hahn, Area 155 (Delaware Valley)

Laurent was a kind and gentle soul and was always available to lead a meeting or lend a hand. He was an exemplary leader for two Philadelphia meetings, as well as a dedicated RI leader, member, and Area Team member. Laurent, we thank you for leaving us stronger and hope we continue to lead with as much enthusiasm as you did.



Marilyn Stringer, Area 86 (New Hampshire)

The New England Area is saddened by the death of Marilyn Stringer, Group Leader from Manchester, New Hampshire. Marilyn was an assistant and group leader for 37 years. She served on the Area team for another 6 years. She was faithful to the Method and a kind and generous person. She supported all that came to her group meetings by demonstrating compassion and humility. All who knew her will miss her and are grateful for her leadership. She was truly one of Dr. Low's Dear Ones.



Announcements

FB Meeting page

Effective January 1, 2023, you must be an RI Member to participate in the Facebook Meeting Page. This will provide a better experience for all and ensure that people using the page know Dr. Low's method and how to give examples and spots. If your membership is not current, you can renew. **BONUS:** you will receive one of our stigma-busting tote bags as a thank-you gift! Other benefits of membership include the quarterly Recovery Reporter, Weekly Wisdom e-mails, discounts on workshops, and more. Plus, you will be supporting our programs to help others.

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

Harrisburg meeting celebrates 45 years!!

On January 8, 1978, the late Bill and Jeanne Kelly brought the Recovery program to Harrisburg, PA, and lead the meeting until the end of 1985 when they retired and turned the leadership over to Rick Rubin. Eventually Rick co-led the group with Dave Long and they closed the meeting in the fall of 1989. In the Fall of 1991 Rick and fellow original member John Sebastian restarted the group and when John retired in 2008 Rick assumed the leadership of the group and has been leading ever since. Now we are a phone meeting and everyone loves this format. I can't believe that this coming January 8, 2023 we will celebrate our group's 45th birthday. Wow how time flies! Thank you, Recovery, for giving me my life again.

Sincerely,
Rick R.

Area 155 Team Leader and Group Leader, Harrisburg, PA
(Find Rick's phone meeting on the RI website - Tuesdays, 6pm Eastern)

Welcoming Gulf Bend Center to the RI Affiliate Family!

We are pleased to announce that we have a new licensing agreement with Gulf Bend Center, located in Victoria, TX, which provides integrated behavioral health and intellectual and developmental disability services to seven neighboring counties. One of our RI Members, Ashley S., a licensed professional counselor and long-time RI member, is an employee with Gulf Bend Center and introduced us to the possibility of partnership. These meetings will be private for their Intensive Outpatient Program participants. We thank Ashley for bringing RI to their network of constituents and for the additional support the Area Team of 171 (South Texas) provided her.

Book Study

Are you an Intellectualist or a Romanticist? Find out in our next Book Study!! Join us for a closer look at the core concepts of Dr. Low's method on Sunday, February 26, 5pm Eastern.

If you received an email for the previous book study, you are on the list. Otherwise, please email davesdecafe@gmail.com to be added to the list.



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Wisdom of Dr. Low

Why did Phil think he was unable to swap thoughts? He had been swapping them all his life. For upward of thirty years, he had practiced the game of accepting ideas, rejecting them, exchanging the one for another, dropping them and picking them up just as he wished, wanted and chose. The swap was usually effected with facility and rapidity; sometimes it required hard work and long pull. But whether

easy or difficult, the wanting was practiced and the choice made. What made Phil believe that all of a sudden he had lost the capacity for wanting and choosing? And as to commanding your muscles to do your bidding? This is done every second of your daily activity. You want to sit down and do it. You wish to stand and rise from your seat. You decide to make a trip, to enter business, to marry, to save a life or sacrifice your own, and you carry out your decision either instantly or after hesitation and deliberation. Nothing is needed for the successful execution of these acts and plans but Will and choice. And thoughts and muscles are made to obey the dictates of Will and choice. Why did Phil assume he could not choose "at will" to direct his thoughts and to command his muscles?

Beliefs are frequently stubborn and obstinate. They may become fixed, offering resistance to the summons of the Will. This is particularly the case if the belief has persisted for years. You know how difficult it is for me to shake your beliefs that you are doomed, that your heart will give out, that your fatigue will lead to exhaustion. Muscles are just as likely to develop obstinacy. They tend to acquire set patterns of behavior, preferring certain well grooved acts and avoiding others. Just think of the habits of procrastination, of twitches and spasms, of restlessness and sluggishness, and you will realize that muscles are not always pliant tools in the hands of the Will. In order to pry loose the resisting beliefs and rebellious muscles, attempt after attempt must be made to dislodge them from their comfortable berth and to force them to give up resistance. The resistance may be so strong that the attempts to break it must be repeated in innumerable trials before success is achieved. This requires the Will to use a great deal of power in continued strenuous practice, hence, the terms will power and will practice. By exercising its power, the Will masters its task and learns how to rearrange beliefs and redirect muscles. Having gone through the learning process, the Will gains experience and becomes an expert Will.

From Will, Beliefs and Muscles, in *Mental Health Through Will Training*

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