



*RECOVERY
ROAD
ONLINE*

**GROUP UNITY STEP
ELEVEN**

ZOOM UP THE HIGHWAY OF HOPE



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Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at all levels of public broadcast (e.g. podcasts, streaming, films, television, internet).

Without its legions of well-wishers, RRO could never have grown as it has. Throughout the world, immense and favorable publicity of every description has been the principal means of bringing compulsive gamblers into our fellowship. In RRO groups and homes, messages ring constantly. One message says, “I read a story on the internet . . .”; another, “We heard a podcast . . .”, and still another, “We saw something about RRO on Facebook . . .” It is no exaggeration to say that most of Recovery Road Online’s membership has been led to us through channels like these.

The inquiring voices are not just those of compulsive gamblers or their families. Doctors, having read articles about compulsive gamblers and how Recovery Road Online can help, contact or e-mail for more information. Clergymen, seeing articles on the web, also make inquiries. Employers, learning that great corporations have set their approval upon us, wish to discover what can be done about compulsive gamblers in their own firms.

Therefore, a great responsibility fell upon us to develop the best possible public relations policy for Recovery Road Online. Through many painful



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experiences, we think we have arrived at what that policy ought to be. It is the opposite, in many ways, of usual promotional practice. We found that we had to rely upon the principle of attraction rather than promotion.

Let's see how these two contrasting ideas, attraction and promotion, work out. A political party wishes to win an election; so, it advertises the virtues of its leadership to draw votes. A worthy charity wants to raise money; forthwith, its letterhead shows the name of every distinguished person whose support can be obtained. Much of the political, economic, and religious life of the world is dependent upon publicized leadership.

People who symbolize causes and ideas fill a deep human need. We of RRO do not question that; but we do have to honestly face the fact that being in the public eye is hazardous, especially for us. By temperament, nearly every one of us had been an irrepressible promoter, and the prospect of a fellowship composed almost entirely of promoters was frightening. Considering this explosive factor, we knew we had to exercise self-restraint.

The way in which this restraint paid off for Alcoholics Anonymous was startling. It resulted in more favorable publicity for A.A. than could possibly have been obtained through all the arts and abilities of A.A.'s best



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press agents. Obviously, A.A. had to be publicized somehow; so, they resorted to the idea that it would be far better to let our friends do this for us. Precisely that has to an unbelievable extent. Veteran newsmen, trained doubters that they are, have gone all out to carry A.A.s message. To them, they are more than the source of good stories. On almost every news front, the men and women of the press have attached themselves to A.A. as friends.

In the beginning, the press could not understand the refusal of all personal publicity. They were genuinely baffled by our insistence upon anonymity. Then they got the point. Here was something rare in the world; a fellowship that said it wishes to publicize its principles and its work, but not its individual members. The press was delighted with this attitude. Thereafter, these friends have reported with an enthusiasm which the most ardent members would find hard to match.

There was actually a time when the press of America thought anonymity was better for us than some of our own members did. At one point, there was some of the society breaking anonymity at the public level. With perfectly good intent, these folks declared that the principle of anonymity was “horse and buggy stuff” and something appropriate to the pioneering days. They were sure that A.A. would go faster and farther if it availed itself of modern publicity methods. A.A. they pointed out, included many



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persons of local, national, and international fame. Provided they were willing, and many were, why shouldn't their membership be publicized; thereby, encouraging others to join. These were plausible arguments, but happily our friends of the writing profession disagreed with them.

The Headquarters wrote letters to practically every news outlet in North America, setting forth our public relations policy of attraction rather than promotion, and emphasizing personal anonymity as A.A.'s greatest protection. Since that time, editors and copyright people have repeatedly deleted names and pictures of members from A.A. copy; frequently, they have reminded ambitious individuals of A.A. about the anonymity policy. They have even sacrificed good stories to this end. The force of their cooperation has certainly helped. Only a few A.A. members are left who deliberately break anonymity at the public level.

This, in brief, is the process by which Recovery Road Online's Group Unity Step Eleven was constructed. To us, however, it represents far more than a sound public relations policy. It is more a denial of self-seeking. This Group Unity Step is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambitions have no place in Recovery Road Online. In it, each member becomes an active guardian of our fellowship.