



RECOVERY ROAD ONLINE

GROUP UNITY STEP FOUR

ZOOM UP THE HIGHWAY OF HOPE



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Each meeting group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or Recovery Road Online as a whole.

Autonomy is a ten-dollar word. But in relation to us, it means very simply that every Recovery Road group can manage its affairs exactly as it pleases, except when RRO as a whole is threatened. Comes now the same question raised in Step One. Isn't such liberty foolishly dangerous?

Over the years, every conceivable deviation from our Twelve Steps of Recovery and Group Unity has been tried. That was sure to be, since we are so largely a band of ego-driven individualists. Children of chaos, we have defiantly played with every brand of fire; only to emerge unharmed and, we think, wiser. These very deviations created a vast process of trial and error, which under the guidance of a Higher Power, has brought us to where we started today.

When Unity was first written, we had become sure that a group could stand almost any amount of battering. We saw that the group, exactly like the individual, must eventually conform to whatever tested principles would guarantee survival. We discovered that there was perfect safety in the process of trial and error. So confident of this had we become, that the



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original statement of Unity carried this significant sentence: “Any two or more compulsive gamblers gathered together to stop gambling may call themselves a Recovery Road Online group; provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliations.” This meant, of course, that we had been given the courage to declare each RRO group an individual entity, strictly reliant on its own conscience as a guide to action.

In charting this enormous expanse of freedom, we did find it necessary to post two storm signals; a group ought not do anything that would harm Recovery Road Online as a whole; nor ought it affiliate itself with anything or anybody else. There would be great danger should we begin to call some groups “solids”, others “slippers”, and still others “Catholic” or “Protestant”. The Recovery Road Online group would have to stick to its course or be hopelessly lost. To stop gambling had to be its sole objective. In all other respects, there was perfect freedom of will and action. Every group had the right to be wrong.

When Alcoholics Anonymous was getting started, lots of eager groups were forming. In a coastal town, a real “eager beaver” had come along. He was as hot as a firecracker about it. Star gazing, he dreamed of innovations. He and his followers figured that they needed a great recovery center; a kind of pilot plant that groups could duplicate everywhere. Beginning on the ground floor, there would be a club; on the second story they would council compulsive gamblers and hand them currency for their back debts;



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the third deck would house an educational project, quite uncontroversial, of course. In imagination, the gleaming center was to go up several stories more; but three would do, to start. This would take a lot of money—other people’s money. Believe it or not, wealthy people bought the idea.

There were, however, a few conservative dissenters among the compulsive gamblers. They wrote to headquarters, wanting to know about this sort of streamlining. They understood that the “eager beaver” and his followers, just to nail things down good, were about to apply for a charter from the main office. These few were disturbed and skeptical. Of course, there was a promoter to take over the deal—super promoter. By his eloquence, he allayed all fears; despite advice from the main office that it could issue no charter, and that ventures that had mixed clubs, education and counseling had come to sticky ends elsewhere. To make things safer, the promoter organized three corporations and became President of them all! Freshly painted, the new center shone. The warmth of it all spread through the city. To insure foolproof, continuous operation, sixty-one rules and regulations were adopted.

But alas, this bright scene was not long in darkening. Confusion replaced serenity. It was found that some gamblers yearned for education; but they doubted if they were compulsive gamblers. The personality defects of others could be cured, maybe with a loan. Some were club minded. It was



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a beehive of activity; but unlike a beehive, it was confusion compounded. A recovery group, as such, simply couldn't handle this sort of project. All too late, that was discovered. Then came the explosion! A chill shock, damp with fear and frustration, fell over the group. That lifted, and a wonderful thing happened. The head promoter wrote headquarters and said he wished he'd paid some attention to previous experience. Then he did something else; he wrote, "Don't take yourselves too damn seriously."

Thus, it was, that under Group Unity Step Four, a recovery group had exercised its own right to be wrong. Moreover, it had performed a great service for Recovery Road Online; as it had been humbly willing to apply the lessons it had learned. It had picked itself up with a smile and had gone on to better things. Even the head promoter could laugh at himself, and that is the very acme of humility.