



RECOVERY ROAD ONLINE

GROUP UNITY STEP SEVEN

ZOOM UP THE HIGHWAY OF HOPE



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Every Recovery Road Online group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Self-supporting compulsive gamblers? Who ever heard of such a thing? Yet, we find that's what we have to be. This principle is evidence of the profound change that Recovery Road Online has wrought in all of us. Everyone knows that active compulsive gamblers scream that they have no problems that money can't cure. Always, we've had our hands out. Time after time, we've been dependent upon someone, usually moneywise. When a fellowship composed entirely of compulsive gamblers states that it's going to pay its bills; that is really news!

Probably no Recovery Road Online unity step had the labor pains that this one did. In early times, members were all broke. When we add to this the habitual supposition that people ought to give money to compulsive gamblers trying to stop gambling, it can be understood why we thought we deserved a pile of folding money. What great things we would be able to do with it. But, oddly enough, people who had money thought otherwise. They figured that, with stopping gambling, it was high time we paid our own way. So, our fellowship remained poor, because it had to.

There was another reason for our collective poverty. It was soon apparent that while compulsive gamblers would spend lavishly on Twelfth



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Step cases, they had a terrific aversion to dropping money into a meeting place hat for group purposes. We were astounded to find that we were as tight as the bark on a tree. So, the movement, started and remained broke, while individual members became prosperous. Compulsive gamblers are certainly “all” or “nothing” people. Our reactions to money prove this.

As the fellowship emerged from infancy to adolescence, we swung from the idea that we needed vast sums of money to the notion that we shouldn't have any money. On every lip were the words, “You can't mix recovery and money. We will have to separate the spiritual from the material.” We took this violent new tack because, here and there, members had tried to make money out of their recovery fellowship connections; thus, we feared we'd be exploited. Now and then, grateful benefactors had endowed clubhouses; as a result, there was sometimes outside interference in our affairs.

Once another society was offered a percentage in a motion picture of “Nick the Greek”. The hassle over the money, even though they did not accept it, was carried on for a long time. The clubs offered to make donations. Being frightened by these complications, some groups refused to have a cent in their treasuries.



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Despite these misgivings, we had to recognize the fact that our fellowship had to function. Meeting places cost something. To save whole areas from turmoil, small offices had to be set up, telephones installed, and a few full-time secretaries hired. Over many protests, these things were accomplished. We saw that if they weren't, the person coming in the door couldn't get a break. These simple services would require small sums of money that we could and would pay ourselves. At last, the pendulum stopped swinging and pointed straight at Group Unity Step Seven as it reads today.

In this connection, Jim, the founder of Gamblers Anonymous, likes to tell the following story. He explains that Paul Coates had a spread on compulsive gamblers. There were over fifty letters received from this coverage. All were answered by Jim and his wife. The first meeting was held on Friday the 13th, September 1957.

Thirteen people showed up, of which seven were compulsive gamblers. At the very first meeting, someone asked what happened to the monies. It was explained that it would go to pay rent, refreshments, and to purchase literature for answering mail, etc. There were many times this group needed money to pay back rent; and since there wasn't enough, volunteers answered mail, made phone calls, etc. One of the original seven showed up at Jim's house. He had just "blown" everything again and he needed money



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for groceries for the wife and kids. Goodhearted Jim gave it to him although he could not afford it. That night at the meeting the Treasurer gave a talk on how broke the group was; that they were behind in rent; and the landlord would put them out if they didn't pay up. He concluded his remarks by saying, "Now, boys, please go heavier on the hat tonight, won't you?"

Jim heard all this quite plainly, as he was trying to help a newcomer sitting next to him. The hat came in his direction and he fumbled around and came up with a fifty-cent piece. Somehow, it looked like a very big coin. Hastily he dragged it back and fished out a dime which clinked thinly as he dropped it in the hat. Then he woke up! He, who had boasted his own generosity that very afternoon, was treating his own meeting worse than he had treated the distant compulsive gambler who had asked for ten dollars. (That man was not at the meeting and was never seen again.) He realized that his ten-dollar gift to the "slippee" was an ego-feeding proposition; bad for him and bad for the "slippee". There was a place in Recovery Road Online where spirituality and money would mix, and that was in the basket!

There is another story about money. One night in 1965, the Board of Regents of the main headquarters was having its monthly meeting. The agenda discussion included a very important subject: headquarters was well over \$1,000.00 in the "red". What a debate we had on that! A special meeting was held, at which the facts were laid out. One solution was to take outside contributions. Some said, "The groups would never support



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giving money to headquarters, so why not take outside contributions. Let's take all such donations in the future. We're going to need them. We can't let headquarters shut down; it's far too vital!" Then came the opposition.

They pointed out that the Board of Regents already knew of many outside donations that they could have taken. Heaven only knows how many we did not hear about. Moreover, at the slightest intimation to the general public that we needed money, we could become immensely rich; but like the compulsive gamblers first bet, it would, if taken, inevitably set up a disastrous chain reaction. Where would that land us? Whoever pays the piper is apt to call the tune. If the board obtains money from outside sources, the groups might be tempted to run things without reference to the wishes of the fellowship as a whole. Relieved of responsibility, every compulsive gambler would shout and say, "Oh, the board is rich. Why should I bother?" The pressure of that fat treasury surely tempted the board to invent all kinds of schemes to do good with such funds; and so, divert the fellowship from its primary purpose. The moment that happened, our fellowship's confidence would be shaken. The board would be isolated and would fall under heavy attack of criticism from both the fellowship and the public. These were the possibilities, pro and con.



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The past wrote a bright page of recovery history. They declared for the principle that Recovery Road Online must always decline outside contributions and that the board should have a working, balanced budget with a prudent reserve. This would be the board's financial policy. At that moment, we set up the principle of sound budgeting; declining outside contributions. The expeditors were reenacted. When these facts were printed, there was a profound reaction. To people familiar with endless drives for charitable funds, the fellowship presented a strange and refreshing spectacle!

Approving editorials, here and abroad, generated a wave of confidence in the integrity of the fellowship and had revived an ideal that what people had talked about had almost been forgotten.

EFFECTIVE May 2, 2020

Recovery Road Online is a Recovery & Support Group for those with a compulsive gambling problem. You may apply to join our private Facebook Group at the following: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1636657949798079/>. We also conduct 12 Step Meetings though the video conference app ZOOM. We are not affiliated with Gamblers Anonymous.

