

Racists in Recovery

Anonymous

(RIRA)

*A twelve step approach to
healing from white privilege*



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healing from white privilege*

Barnstable Friends Meeting Quakers of the Light



"May Creator bless you and keep you,
May this Spirit cause Light to shine upon you ...
and grant you peace" Numbers 6: 24-26

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The work is sponsored by Barnstable Friends Meeting. We wish to express our appreciation and respect for the literature of Alcoholics Anonymous as we have used the outline of their 12 steps in designing our program's approach to deal with racism in the United States. This booklet is a work in progress and still in draft form; we welcome any comments or suggestions. These may be emailed to rch@cape.com or sent to Barnstable Friends Meeting, P.O. Box 718 Marstons Mills MA 02648.

Table of Contents

DEFINITIONS	PAGE 6
PREAMBLE One Person's story	PAGE 7
IS EVERY WHITE PERSON A RACIST?	PAGE 9
THERE IS A SOLUTION:	PAGE 10
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER OPPRESSIONS?	PAGE 11
12 STEP PROGRAM	PAGE 13
EXPLORING THE STEPS:	PAGE 15
BUDDY SYSTEM	PAGE 23
WHAT DOES RIRA DO?	PAGE 27
CONCLUSION	PAGE 28

DEFINITIONS

Stereotype:

A general viewpoint about a group based upon false assumptions. For example “Red haired people have quick tempers”.

Prejudice:

Prejudice is an unfavorable opinion formed from irrational feelings without thought or reason. An unfounded hatred, fear or mistrust of a person or group. For example “I don’t like red haired people because they have quick tempers”.

Privilege:

Privilege is an advantage, right or benefit that is not available to everyone. For example “Since you and I don’t have red hair we are more suited to jobs where having an even temper is important and if there is an argument it clearly won’t be our fault”.

***We learn to be racist,
therefore we can learn
not to be racist. Racism
is not genetical. It has
everything to do with
power.***

-- Jane Elliot

COMMON DEFINITIONS CONCERNING RACE

Racism:

Racism is racial prejudice with the institutional power to enforce it.

RIRA DEFINITION

Racist

A racist is someone from the group with institutional power who has been conditioned with attitudes and stereotypes of racial prejudice and privilege.

PREAMBLE

One Person's story

My name is Rachel and I'm a racist. No, I'm not secretly a member of the KKK rather I have come to admit that my attitudes and assumptions around race are unmanageable in a just society. I look

Daddy taught me that racism was a sickness and to have compassion for racist whites as I would have compassion for a polio victim. Racism wasn't a problem with me, he told me, it was a problem they had.
Andrew Young

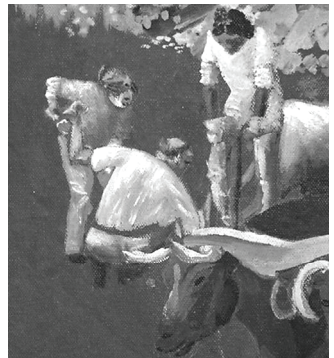
to a Power greater than myself to restore myself to sanity. Just as our collective thinking about what it means to be an alcoholic has changed from simply a derelict with a paper sack to include "respectable" people, so my personal thinking has changed regarding the affliction of racism.

The American Heritage dictionary defines a racist as a person who "believes that race accounts for differences in human character or

ability and that a particular race is superior to others". While I certainly don't consciously believe this -- what about an unconscious belief because of being raised in white privilege? Previously I would have spoken simply about my racist attitudes and behaviors but I now think this is skirting the issue.

At a very early age I was very carefully taught and conditioned about my role in society, especially in relation to others. Being from a "good" liberal family it was most easy for me to deny any part of this problem. Of course prejudice is wrong. I viewed white practices, customs and attitudes as the norm against which others were to be compared. My spirit requires that I now struggle with the results of these attitudes having entitlements that are not enjoyed by other groups, including:

- looking at the faces of my society's leaders and seeing almost all people of my race



- having my race be the source of almost all the art and music “Great Masterpieces.”
- Being taught in school only about famous explorers, philosophers, leaders and inventors who happened to be members of my race.



Although I have been slow to precisely name my addiction, I have been in recovery for some time now. I am working very hard to make amends for this aberrant behavior.

We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.

-- Martin Luther King, Jr

I try to promptly admit it when I am wrong regarding the issues facing people of color. Just as important I am seeking through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with Spirit and bring this divine energy to effect a solution both within

my heart and the world. I look forward to someday reaping a harvest of Joy, Light¹ and Oneness.



*. Light here is defined as the guiding Spirit or divine presence in each person and full, accessible spiritual awareness .

IS EVERY WHITE PERSON IN THE US A RACIST?

Sociologists have written that the culture in the United States, like all cultures, affords privilege to certain groups. This conditioning is done through our entire socialization process that includes our edu-

We are still conditioning people in this country and, indeed, all over the globe to the myth of white superiority. We are constantly being told that we don't have racism in this country anymore, but most of the people who are saying that are white. White people think it isn't happening because it isn't happening to them.

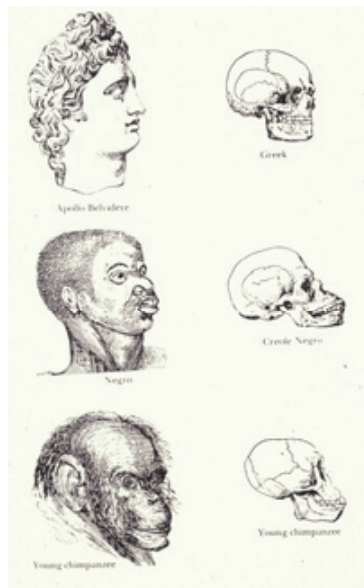
-- Jane Elliot

cation system, all forms of media, the way our history is recorded, the legal system, medical care, banking, housing, etc. This system indoctrinates all white Americans with certain attitudes — unless for some unusual reason we have been able to resist that indoctrination.

For example in June 2007 there was a TV cartoon show on Saturday morning billed as an “educational program” that showed a bleached blonde super-mom fighting the “bad” person — a women of color who was pushed into a cage amid much cheer-

ing. What subtle message does this send our children?

Just because this sort of conditioning exists doesn't mean we must always “go along.” Sometimes some of us do contradict society's conditioning. However a vast majority of us will integrate these negative, racist attitudes. Judging isn't the business of RIRA That is left to a Spiritual Power as any of us understand this concept. Here within you is the only place the truth is known. If in doubt come check us out. We are open to anyone who seeks racial clarity.



THERE IS A SOLUTION:

Sharing power is a win-win situation. The system of privilege benefiting one race is like a neurosis that seeks to avoid pain at any cost. This system requires a phenomenal amount of energy to maintain and protect itself. In addition, people of color daily

There is a Christianity ... which takes off fetters instead of binding them on — that breaks every yoke — that lifts up the bowed down. It passes, link by link, until it finds the lowest link in humanity's chain — humanity's most degraded condition. It reaches down its arm and tells them to stand up.

Frederick Douglass, abolitionist

expend much energy in dealing with racism. Thus, much human energy is wasted. It's time now to acknowledge the past, make amends as possible, acknowledge the positive contributions that people of color have made to our society, and, then and only then, forgive each other and ourselves. Otherwise we feed the forces of racism that have kept humanity separate,

divided and powerless. We do not have the luxury of saying that racism is exclusively another's problem. We should not silence ourselves with fear or apathy. We have all been hurt: allies, victims/survivors/observers of racism and perpetrators. Ultimately, we all must find constructive, positive ways to heal.



We can and must recognize that the patterns of racist behavior are not the people. Each of us is inherently brilliant, loving and powerful. Our coping strategies, based upon large and small hurts and traumas, from the time of our birth, get in the way. These we can heal and correct. A rope made up of hundreds of cotton threads is impossible to break. Yet if we separate the strands, it is possible to and snap one thread at a time. Thus we can break the bindings that keep us from realizing our full potential as peacemakers. Healing ourselves is an important step. One step is not going to take us very far. We must then go out in the world and challenge the institutions and other aspects of society that perpetuate racism.

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER OPPRESSIONS?

Don't they count?

Racism is one of many prejudices backed up by institutional power. Others include classism (based upon money and social standing), sexism (based upon gender), homophobia (based upon sexual orientation), etc. The founders of RIRA have determined (believe) that racism is the piece that has to move first — for the following reasons:

1. There are no victims of racism that aspire to be white and in most cases it is a physical impossibility, although most people of color want the same privileges that whites have.

Yet, for instance, even those people of color who are from the top in terms of class will have a difficult time hailing a cab in New York.

2. Unlike sexism, few if any of racism's victims deny that the problem exists or speak of the benefits of their oppression. Unlike violence against women or pay inequality, few will make excuses for racists' behavior or see it as unconnected to oppression.

“Whites think because they hold us in their infernal chains of slavery, that we wish to be white...but they are dreadfully deceived — we wish to be just as it pleased our Creator to have made us.”

David Walker's Appeal, In Four Articles



3. Short of violent revolution, victims of oppression have no ability to change the systems that keep injustice in place.



4. Given the lack of attention that many whites, including those in positions of leadership, are giving to racism, it seems the best place to start.

A turning point happened for one of the founders when she came to see that our only hope in creating a world of peace and justice, without sexism or other forms of discrimination, is to trust, support and follow the leadership of women of color. Based upon friendships with local Native women in her community she learned that they know, from stories of the actual lives of their great, great grandparents, what a non-oppressive society looks, feels and acts like in reality. For example, in their language there is no word for rape as it didn't exist in their original cultures. The rest of us can only imagine such a world.

This does not mean that our founder expects women of color to be perfect. Nor does she believe that they will lead us into an idyllic past. Rather, by having faith in their leadership, we will journey together into a future that is dynamic, growing and evolving.

I am where I am because of the bridges that I crossed. Sojourner Truth was a bridge. Harriet Tubman was a bridge. Ida B. Wells was a bridge. Madame C. J. Walker was a bridge. Fannie Lou Hamer was a bridge.

-- Oprah Winfrey



-Jimi Hendrix

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Overcomes the Love of Power
the World Will Know Peace**

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12 STEP PROGRAM FOR WHITES WORKING ON RACISM

1. We admit we are powerless over our addiction to racism and that racism in our lives and community has become unmanageable.
2. We believe that a Spiritual Power greater than ourselves, as we understand this concept, can restore our culture and ourselves to sanity.
3. We commit to turning our wills and our lives over to the care of this Spiritual Power, as we understand the concept.
4. We are making a searching and fearless personal moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admit to Creator, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We are ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

It's not guilt and not blame and not shame.

It's responsibility and the joy in claiming this accountability and being a solution.

7. We humbly ask Creator to remove our shortcomings.

8. We are making a list of all persons we have harmed, and are willing to make amends to all.

9. We are making direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

“A rattlesnake, if cornered will become so angry it will bite itself. That is exactly what the harboring of hate and resentment against others is - a biting of oneself. We think we are harming others in holding these spite and hates, but the deeper harm is to ourselves.”

-- E. Stanley Jones

10. We continue to take personal inventory, and when we find that ourselves or our society are wrong, we promptly admit it.

11. We seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with Creator, as we understand this concept, praying for knowledge of Creator's will for us and for the power to carry that out.

12. Having experienced a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we continue to try to carry this message to other whites, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



EXPLORING THE STEPS:

1. We admit we are powerless over our addiction to racism and that our lives and community have become unmanageable.

There are many ways in which we are powerless over racism:

a. We are powerless over having been born into the dominant Euro-American race.

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared with what lies within us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

b. We are powerless over the invisible privilege that it affords us.

c. We are powerless over our culture's history with race issues

d. We are powerless over our own indoctrination into this system



How is this an addiction?

Addiction is defined as a state of physiological or psychological dependence liable to have a damaging effect.

The diagnosis of addiction is based on five criteria:

- a. Fear of loss of power in a non white environment
- b. Unmanageable lifestyle
- c. Tolerance of different treatment based upon race
- d. Withdrawal symptoms upon entering communities of color including nervousness, fatigue, discomfort,
- e. Fear of consequences if a person of color is in control, angry or outspoken.



Racism is so universal in this country, so widespread and deep-seated, that it is invisible because it is so normal.

Shirley Chisholm

- ence of not remembering what you have said or done or even that you were present in a racially charged situation
- c. Have you ever not known why something offended someone else?
 - d. Have you thought about the possible occurrence of racial violence?
 - e. Do you find yourself looking for justification of your attitudes regarding race?
 - f. Do you find yourself refusing to talk about racism or trying to rationalize and explain it away?
 - g. Do you make decisions about where you live, who you live and associate with, who you work with, what work you do, based on your continued ability to be in a predominately white setting?
 - h. Can you predict what your feelings, mood, and behavior will be when you are in a mostly non-white environment?
 - i. Do you wish to avoid all discussion of the topic of racism?

Together we can unlock the knowledge, skill and enthusiasm within each of us and collectively bring the world back into balance, a balanced world in which everyone's wisdom, vision and energy have equal authority and power.

The following questions point to an addiction

a. Are you afraid that if you ask for help on the issue of racism people will think less of you?

b. Have you had an experi-



Do you feel that it isn't relevant to you or community?

j. Do you resent being labeled white? As being a racist?

k. When a person of color points out a racist situation, do you become defensive or do you openly acknowledge the possibility?

l. Do you control your anger in such situations?

m. Do you experience negative results from what you say?

How our lives have become unmanageable due to racism

- a. Our lives have become unmanageable due to the contradiction between our belief in equality and the actuality of non-equality
- b. Our lives have become unmanageable due our belief that because we are part of the Divine whole, the suffering of others is our own suffering.
- c. Our lives have become unmanageable because we despise the identification of ourselves as the oppressor.
- d. Our lives have become unmanageable because we see that other social ills cannot be moved until the problem of racism is corrected

Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.

*Paulo Freire, educator
(1921-1997)*

2. We believe that a Spiritual Power, as we understand this concept, greater than ourselves can restore our culture and ourselves to sanity.

Spiritual Power is indispensable for this work because

- a. Racism is essentially a spiritual disease.
- b. Racism alienates us from the roots of our being by constructing a barrier to true heart to heart relationships between humans.
- c. Racism thereby interferes with our relationship with our Higher Power, Creator
- d. Working on racism allows us to expanding across boundaries, connecting the deeper aspects of our true selves at a real personal, social and spiritual level.
- e. It is this deep place within each of us where our true power, the divine spirit dwells.



The current situation with racism, how it manifests and its denial, is insane because:

There is no hope for a better past and peace and reconciliation cannot happen until people have decided that they can consider forgiving people in the present. Then truth, peace and reconciliation are possible.

Landrum Bolling

- a. It is insane that something not rooted in scientific fact has such a detrimental impact.
- b. It is not sane to carry hurts from generation to generation that include those generated from being a victim, perpetrator or witness of racism.
- c. Trying to heal a wounded place by inflicting more violence on someone else is

irrational, yet people do it.

d. Trying to soothe these hurt places by addictive consuming doesn't work.

f. Nor does trying to put the pain on others through racist, behavior patterns.

g. The system of privilege benefiting one race seeks to avoid pain at any cost and requires a phenomenal amount of energy to maintain and protect itself. This energy is wasted. So not only is people of color's potential wasted but white's as well.



3. We commit to turning our wills and our lives over to the care of this Spiritual Power, as we understand the concept.

Major change can happen with the work of one person. Ratified in August

All humanity is one undivided and indivisible family, and each one of us is responsible for the misdeeds of all the others. I cannot detach myself from the wickedest soul.” “It is easy enough to be friendly to one’s friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business. – Mohandas K. Gandhi

1920, the nineteenth amendment gave women the right to vote. The last State to ratify the amendment was Tennessee. It came to a vote because the congress in Tennessee had determined in straw polls

etc. that it would be defeated. It came down to the vote of one first year senator who opposed the

amendment. But he had promised his mother that if his was the deciding vote then he would support the amendment. The reason his mother had insisted on this promise came because of a visit many decades earlier that Susan B. Anthony had paid to their farm. One woman did make a profound difference. This power, with Creators help, is with every person here today.

We have flown the air like birds and swum the sea like fishes but we have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers.

Martin Luther King Jr.

4. We are making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves and our culture.

Making a personal inventory means that we will commit ourselves to talk about our own story and direct experience (I statements) including:

- a. Where we have been hurt by racism
 - as witness
 - as oppressor
- b. Where we sought to take a stand against it.
- c. What are our strong points?
- d. What kind of person are we becoming?
- e. What things in my life have been hard?
- f. What things in my life will continue to be hard as we continue this journey?



“It demands great spiritual resilience not to hate the hater whose foot is on your neck, and an even greater miracle of perception and charity not to teach your child to hate.”

-- James Baldwin

Making an inventory of white culture includes:

- a list of the various ways whites have privilege
- the various ways these have been historically denied people of color
- the various ways these are being denied people of color today.

5. We admit to Creator, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

We commit ourselves to talk about and face the implications of our conditioning including:

- a. How we have benefited from being white and how we are also trapped by it.
- b. How we have been taught that white culture is normal, neutral and ideal so when we work to benefit others we see it as work which allows “them” to be like “us”.

Opting for peace... demands an active struggle against hatred, oppression and disunity, but not by using methods of violence. Building peace requires creative and courageous action.

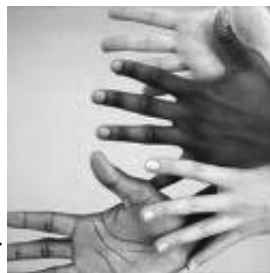
Pope John Paul II

6. We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Including:

- a. empathizing with other whites as they struggle with their own racism.
- b. Supporting other whites as their work leads them into confrontation over their views
- c. Figuring out how to ask for and accept help — and from whom

Accept that working on racism can be scary or difficult — and that’s okay.



7. We humbly ask Creator to remove our shortcomings.

Helping us to accept the thing we cannot change

Having the courage to change the things we can

Having the wisdom to know the difference.

There can be no peace without reconciliation, no reconciliation without forgiveness, no forgiveness without giving up all hope for a better past.

Desmond Tutu

8. We are making a list of all persons we have harmed, and are willing to make amends to them all.

Societal: “Our country’s collective agreement beginning with “We the people, in order to form a more perfect union”. This has been violated.

- a. Through extermination/genocide against Indigenous peoples
- b. Through colonization
- c. Through the slave trade
- d. Through other forms of exploitation



Personal:

- a. Assuming a person of color is sales or housekeeping staff
- b. minimizing contributions during a discussion from a person of color

The opposite of love is not hate, its indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, its indifference. Because with indifference one dies before one actually dies.

Elie Wiesel

c. standing silent when witnessing racist behavior.

d. cultivated oblivion to problems of race and its real consequences

e. felt good about myself when helping the “disadvantaged” while feeling that I was fortunate to have a superior upbringing, community, ethics, education, work habits or superior style and speech and communication skills. For example:

- no paintings on velvet,
- I would never say “aint”

9. We are making direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Including:

- a. how to make personal reparations
- b. Working to get institutional reparations coupled with formal apologies
- c. Deeply listen to people of color and put their needs, thinking and concerns first.

10. We continue to take personal inventory, and when we or our society were or are wrong, promptly admitted it.

We prioritize creating an equitable society, with a healthy environment and healthy relationships.

As spiritual people, we move in a good, clean, healthy and respectful ways.

We commit to making an effort to end racism, even though the outcome seems impossible or hopeless and that giving up seems logical.

11. We seek to improve our conscious contact with Creator, as we understand this concept, through prayer and meditation, praying only for knowledge of this will for us and the power to carry that out.

We understand that we are on the right path, joining in Spirit moving into Light. With gratitude, joy and hopefulness, we appreciate others' wisdom, care and acceptance.

We understand our pure goodness and the unique and powerful way that we manifest G-d's love in the world

We must delve into the depths where neither liberals nor conservatives dare to tread, namely, into the murky waters of despair and dread that now flood the streets of black America.

Cornell West

12. Having a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to other whites, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The promptings of our hearts have the intention to be strong, powerful and productive in ways that serve G-d's higher purpose as each of us sees the Light guiding us. We embrace having real friends of all races to share our journey with us and together repair the world so that we can — as one — approach a new Eden.

We intend to devote ourselves to inner and outer work against racism, understanding that even if this process is scary, it's about growth.



BUDDY SYSTEM

What is the buddy system (what is a buddy)?

When attending a workshop on ending racism, one of RIRA founders took part in an exercise on how get someone else interested in anti-racism work. The idea was to develop strategies to break through the hearing of “blah, blah, blah” when we talk about racism. The least effective methods turned out to be the use of guilt and/or statistics. What works for everyone is first connecting to the person and their interests: deep listening. Out of this concept, the usefulness of a buddy system was born. Through sharing we have discovered, that our

***It's not about pain.
Pain is just a byproduct of
growth and a healing.***



lives could be enriched beyond measure. What does RIRA mean by the buddy system? To join some organizations, you must have a sponsor — a person who vouches for you, presents you as being suitable for membership. This is definitely not the case with RIRA Anyone who has a desire to

work on racism is welcome to join us! In RIRA, your buddy is your buddy, and buddies meet as equals.

Essentially, the process of the buddy system is this: A white person who has made some progress in the recovery program shares that experience on a continuous, individual basis with another white person who is new to the program and attempting to attain or maintain awareness

***Most of the things worth
doing in the world had
been declared impossible
before they were done.***

Justice Louis Brandeis

of racism through RIRA. When attending RIRA meetings, we may feel confused, fearful, sick and apprehensive. Although people at meetings respond to our questions willingly, that alone isn't enough. Many other questions occur to us between meetings; we find that we need constant, close support. As we begin learning and find someone we can talk with freely and confidentially, we ask that person to be our buddy.

Whether you are a newcomer who is hesitant about “bothering” anyone, or a member who has been around for some time trying to go it alone, the buddy system is yours for the asking.

We urge you: Do not delay. Racists recovering in RIRA and those seeking clarity on the issue want to share with others what they have learned. We know from experience that we are greatly strengthened when we “give it away”!

The buddy system also means the responsibility that the group as a whole has for helping the newcomer. This is one of the most important planned activities of the members. It is informal, but it is a basic part of the RIRA approach to recovery from racism through the Twelve Steps.

The buddy system, with its continuing interest in any seeking clar-

Audre Lorde; woman of color , lesbian, poet states in *The Master’s Tools will Never Dismantle the Master’s House*: “Interdependency between women is a way to a freedom which allows the I to be, not in order to be used, but in order to be creative. Advocating the mere tolerance of difference between women is a total denial of the creative function of difference in our lives. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power be generated to seek new ways of being in the world, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no characters. As women, we have been taught either to ignore our differences or to view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change. Without community there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. Within the interdependency of mutual (non dominant) differences lies that security which enables us to descend into the chaos of knowledge and return with true visions of our future, along with the power to effect those changes which can bring the future into being.”

ity on the issue, can develop when the second person is willing to be helped, admits having a problem, and decides to seek a way out of the trap helping a newcomer adjust to a new way of life.

How does the buddy system help the newcomer?

The buddy system assures the newcomer that there is at least one

The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood.

_Martin Luther King, Jr.

person who understands the situation and cares — one person to turn to without embarrassment when doubts, questions or problems linked to racism arise. The buddy system gives the newcomer an understanding, sympathetic friend when one is needed most.

The buddy system also provides the bridge enabling the new person to meet other racists — in a home group and in other groups visited.

What should a newcomer expect from a buddy?

An RIRA buddy does not provide any such services as those offered by a social worker, a doctor, a nurse, or a marriage counselor. A buddy is simply a recovering racist who helps the newcomer solve one problem: how to adjust to racism in self and society.

Must the newcomer agree with everything the buddy says?

If the buddy's ideas sound strange or unclear, the newcomer had better speak up and ask questions.



Theirs is supposed to be an easy, open relationship, in which both parties talk freely and honestly with each other. The RIRA program is simple, but it didn't seem that way to many of us at first. Often, we learned by asking questions, at closed meetings or — most especially — in conversations with our buddies.



May a newcomer change buddies?

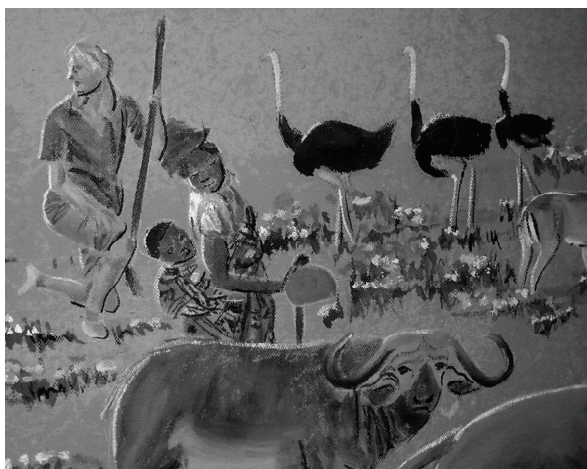
We are always free to select another buddy with whom we feel more comfortable, particularly if we believe this member will be more helpful to our growth in RIRA

Is it ever too late to get a buddy?

No. An RIRA member who has been in or “around” the Fellowship for many years often finds that getting a good buddy, talking frankly, and listening can make the whole program open up as it never did before. Perhaps such a member has been associating with people who stay on the fringes of RIRA, attend meetings casually, but have not yet truly taken the First Step. This can nourish secret reservations about one’s own racism.

“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe unto him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.”

-- Ecclesiastes 4:9-10.



I also believe that it's almost impossible for people to change alone. We need to join with others who will push us in our thinking and challenge us to do things we didn't believe ourselves capable of.

-- Frances Moore Lappe

What Does RIRA Do?_

1. RIRA members share their experience with anyone seeking help with the problem of racism; they give person-to-person service or “the buddy system” to the person coming to RIRA who has bias against people of color. However, in no way is anyone coerced into joining.

2. The RIRA program, set forth in our Twelve Steps, offers the racist a way to develop a satisfying life without racism.

3. This program is discussed at RIRA group meetings.

a. Open speaker meetings — open to racists and seekers for racial clarity. (Attendance at an open RIRA meeting is the best way to learn what RIRA is, what it does, and what it does not do.) At speaker meetings, RIRA members “tell their stories.” They describe their personal experiences with racism, (“I” statements), how they came to RIRA, and how their lives have changed as a result of Racists in Recovery. It is not a

time for open discussion.

b. Step meetings (usually closed) — Most meetings are step meetings where one step is chosen and discussed at length.

c. RIRA members may be asked to conduct the informational meetings about RIRA. These meetings about RIRA are not regular RIRA group meetings.



We stand at a crossroads. One path leads to deterioration, destruction and annihilation. The other way leads to rejuvenation and rebirth. It is too late to stop the change.... Our relationship to the earth and each other during this period will undergo a fundamental realignment. Together we can facilitate a global experience of awakening.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of RIRA is to carry its message of recovery to the racist seeking help. Together, we can do what none of us could accomplish alone. We can serve as a source of personal experience and be an ongoing support system for recovering racists.

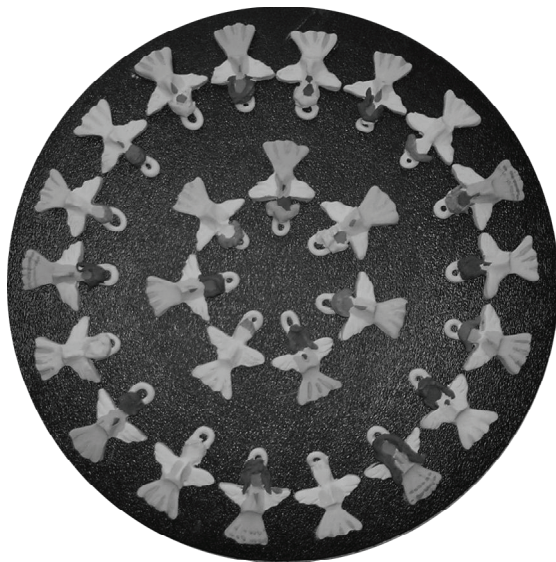
We must bring together the divisions that oppress us and keep us powerless. We must integrate our spiritual, emotional and intellectual natures.

We must push the boundaries of healing to wholeness beyond until our metaphysical arms are so wide that they encircle and embrace the entire world and fill it with healing, hope, and love.

As we connect with each other we can form an infinite web of love and support. We can release the pure, perfect people we all truly are. We can build a world of justice so that we can live in peace and harmony with all creation. Although violence

hangs like a shroud around the globe, our past has shown that radical social change doesn't start with mass movements. It begins with individuals, people like you and me. Let's join and feel that eternal connection to our true Selves, mother earth and the entire universe. Let's trust the guidance that we receive from this source that is beyond our own egos. Let's deeply listen to each other with both our hearts and minds. Let's live each moment as a sacred moment. Let's meet each other as the sacred people we all are truly. Let's walk together into a better tomorrow.

A rabbi asked his students when was it dawn, so that they could distinguish the light from darkness for morning prayers. One student replied, "When I can distinguish a goat from a dog?" "No," answered the rabbi. Another student suggested, "When I can distinguish a palm tree from a fig tree?" "No," the rabbi replied again. "Well, then, what is the answer?" his students pressed him. "Only when you can look into the face of every man and every woman and see your brother and sister have you seen the light."



“Let us live in love as members of a community. Let us be ready to give and receive help, to rejoice together in the blessings of life and to sympathize with each other in its trials. Let us maintain unity...acknowledge differences and seek to settle conflicts promptly in a manner free of resentment and all forms of inward violence; let us visit one another, making sure that those who are alone are drawn into the wider family of Friends. Thus, we may know one another as fellow workers in the things that endure.” -- *Advices* -page 206
Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting

NOTES

Barnstable Friends Meeting
Quakers of the Light

