

Meta Seven Cardinal Steps In Recovery – R.E.C.O.V.E.R. (Part 3)

STEP 6: Engage our Learning and Support Group positively

- a. Use this painful lesson as opportunity for learning

Lessons are best learnt in the crucible of life. Take advantage of this experience to help you discover about your motives, values, strengths, weaknesses, and psychological temperament.

A senior executive went through a series of ups and downs in her career. Being a very driven person, she never took time off to recalibrate. She was jumping into one job after another, until she finally took half-a-year off to reflect and use these painful lessons to learn about herself. She realized that her motive was impure and materialistic-driven values were wrong. She confessed, “I am now a less angry and driven-person. There is more to life than money – relationship matters!”

- b. Find support from close friends and family members

Those who recover well usually have strong support groups, be it friends or family members. However, we have to be careful who we find and whose help we seek. It is common to engage with those who keep our minds simmering in our negativity and brewing our bitterness.

“I have to be careful who I confide in. I don’t want people to reinforce my prejudice, stir up my negativity again and pull me downwards.” One chief executive, who had a fallout with the board, confessed, “My wife was most supportive throughout the episode. She kept me focused, reaffirmed my strength as well as gently chided me for my misdemeanor.”

People with ample social support are also less likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and other types of mental illness.

More than 100 studies attest to friendship’s health benefits¹. Strong social networks are shown to:

- Boost people’s chances of surviving life-threatening illnesses.
- Give them stronger, more resilient immune systems.
- Give people longer life expectancies than those without social support.
- Improve people’s mental health.

- c. Seek professional help, if necessary

Sometimes, the conflict is beyond our capability and capacity to resolve. Seeking professional help must be seen positively, especially in our Asian culture. It’s okay to get professional counseling if we find ourselves spiraling downward, haunted by the trauma. Engaging a professional third-party mediator is another possibility. In some cases, getting an arbitrator to solve the conflict may be the way to go.

“I knew I could not carry on like this. I picked up my courage, gritted my teeth and called a mediator to help me resolve the conflict between my two managers, who had been at each other’s throat for the last six months. This had created such unhealthy competition among themselves and their teams. The mediation really worked,” shared the team leader, who was overjoyed by effectiveness of mediation.

STEP 7: REFRESH yourself genuinely with new relationships and new work

Rebuilding takes a long time. It begins with our willingness to deal with our past and direct our energy to new activities and relationships.

a. Re-establish trust

After a severe conflict, our self-esteem and confidence in the relationship gets battered. Trust in people has to be rebuilt. Find someone who is accepting, trustworthy and understanding because we can't afford another fall-out in relationship. Or else, it will make future recovery even more onerous.

b. Recalibrate our roles & responsibilities

Intense conflict like this is a time to recalibrate what we can do and we can't do. It is a time to reevaluate our contributions and value to the organization. Finding our strengths and channeling our effort to build on our strengths can be a rewarding experience as we face the next phase of our lives.

Dan, an IT director, was so discouraged after he was summarily dismissed from his job after an altercation with his boss. He discovered his true passion to take a more humane approach to management, took time to study human resource management and became a successful HR Director.

c. Re-engage in work and community projects.

It is important our minds are kept occupied with constructive activities. An idle mind is the devil's workshop. One of the best ways to recovery is to keep ourselves engaged with community projects. Often we forget that there are people less fortunate than us.

A divorced mother, who was traumatized by the marital experience, got involved in helping orphans in Kampuchea and came back reenergized, "My marital woe pales into insignificance when compared to the orphans. They have so little and had so much pain, yet they are still so hopeful. It gives me a new direction for living."

d. Review progress.

Check our own progress periodically. The outcomes of a proper recovery is when our dignity is restored, self-growth enhanced, relationship rekindled and our work becoming effective again.

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How do we constructively recover from conflict: Read ***Meta Seven Cardinal Steps in Recovery using RECOVER Acronym (Part 2)***

How do we constructively recover from conflict: Read ***Meta Seven Cardinal Steps in Recovery using RECOVER Acronym (Part 1)***

What are the principles to keep in mind in Conflict Recovery? Read ***Conflict Recovery - The Four Fundamental Principles (Part 2)***

¹ Griffin, K. (2002). *Friends, The Secret To a Longer Life*. Reader's Digest. November, 2002. Reader's Digest Association Far East Ltd. USA.