

## ACA Moving Towards A Solution

*Meeting lasts from 6 - 7:30p*

Hello. Welcome to the Sunday 6pm, Moving Towards A Solution Meeting of Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunctional Families. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

Please be sure all cell phones are turned off during the meeting.

The only requirement for membership in ACA is a desire to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family.

In ACA we meet to share the experience we had as children growing up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional home. That experience affected us then and it affects us today. By practicing the 12 Steps, by focusing on The Solution, and by accepting a Higher Power of our understanding, we find freedom from the effects of alcoholism and other family dysfunction. We identify with "The Problem" and learn to live in "The Solution", one day at a time.

Who will read The Problem?

Who will read The Solution?

Who will read The 12 Steps?

You may have related to our readings even if there was no apparent alcoholism or addiction in your home. This is common because dysfunction can occur in a family without the presence of addiction. We welcome you.

If you are attending an ACA meeting for the first time, will you please introduce yourself by your first name? This is not to embarrass you, but so we may welcome and get to know you.

May we now go around the room and introduce ourselves by our first name. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

Welcome everyone. This program is not easy, but if you can handle what comes up at six consecutive meetings, you will start to gain some clarity and awareness. This will give you freedom from the past. Both you and your life will change.

In the beginning, many of us could not recognize or accept that some of our current attitudes or behaviors result from some experience related to alcoholism or dysfunction in our childhood. We behave as Adult Children, which means we bring self-doubt and fear learned in childhood to our adult interactions. By attending six meetings in a row and attending regularly thereafter, we come to know and begin to act as our True Selves.

This meeting is a Book Study followed by open sharing.

We will now begin reading for 15 minutes from where we left off last, going around the room. Each person will read a page or so, or pass if they prefer not to read. Who would like to start? Please set the timer.

*(timer sounds)*

That concludes the book reading portion of tonight's meeting. We will now have sharing, as related to the reading, or where one is at today in their program, a focus on moving towards a solution in recovery.

We encourage each member to share openly about his or her experiences. This is a safe place to share your adult and childhood experiences without being judged.

What you hear at this meeting should remain at the meeting. We do not talk about another person's story or experiences to other people. Please respect the anonymity of those who share with us today.

We do not cross talk during the sharing time. Cross talk means interrupting, referring to, or commenting on what another person has said during the meeting. We do not cross talk because adult children come from family backgrounds where feelings and perceptions were judged as wrong or defective. We accept without comment what others say, because it is true for them. We work toward taking more responsibility in our lives rather than giving advice to others. The sharing will end at 7:15. Please set the timer accordingly. Who would like to start?

*(timer sounds)*

It is now time for the 7th Tradition which states: "Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." Newcomers are encouraged to buy books and need not contribute at their first meeting.

Who is reading the 12 Traditions?

It's now time for Secretary's announcements.

Thank you for being here and please keep coming back. If you did not have a chance to share, please speak to someone after the meeting if you need to talk.

Who will read The Promises?

Who will read the ACA Bill of Rights?

Will \_\_\_\_\_ please close the meeting with The ACA Serenity Prayer?



## *The ACA Twelve Steps*

- 1) We admitted we were powerless over the effects of alcoholism or other family dysfunction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2) Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God.
- 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5) Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7) Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
- 8) Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10) Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
- 11) Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12) Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps are reprinted and adapted from the original Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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## The ACA Twelve Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on ACA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership in ACA is a desire to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family.
4. Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other 12-Step programs.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.
6. An ACA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the ACA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every ACA Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Adult Children of Alcoholics should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. ACA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, T.V. and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

## Secretary's Announcements

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm your meeting secretary.

It's time for commitment announcements.

Phone List?

Literature?

Treasurer?

Thank the timer and greeter.

Are there any ACA related Announcements?

Non- ACA related announcements?

Let's thank \_\_\_\_\_ for leading a great meeting!

I'll now turn the meeting back over to our leader.

*Need only be read the last Sunday of the month:*

The business meeting is held the 1st Sunday of each month (*next week*).

Group positions carry a 6-month commitment.

January 1st – June 30th, July 1st – December 31st

Position elections will be announced two weeks prior to a new term, taking place the last week of each of each 6 month commitment.



## ACA Personal Bill of Rights

1. You have a right to say no to anything when you are not ready or it's unsafe.
2. Life should have choices beyond mere survival.
3. Life should not be motivated by fear.
4. You have a right to all your feelings.
5. You are probably not guilty.
6. You have a right to make mistakes.
7. There is no need to smile when you cry.
8. You have a right to terminate conversations with people when you feel put down and humiliated,
9. You can be healthier than those around you.
10. It is okay to be relaxed, playful, and frivolous.
11. You have a right to change and grow.
12. It is important to set limits and be selfish.
13. You can be angry at someone you love.
14. You can take care of yourself, no matter what circumstance you are in.



## The Promises

1. We will discover our real identities by loving and accepting ourselves.
2. Our self-esteem will increase as we give ourselves approval on a daily basis.
3. Fear of authority figures and the need to "people-please" will leave us.
4. Our ability to share intimacy will grow inside us.
5. As we face our abandonment issues, we will be attracted by strengths and become more tolerant of weaknesses.
6. We will enjoy feeling stable, peaceful, and financially secure.
7. We will learn how to play and have fun in our lives.
8. We will choose to love people who can love and be responsible for themselves.
9. Healthy boundaries and limits will become easier for us to set.
10. Fears of failures and success will leave us, as we intuitively make healthier choices.
11. With help from our ACA support group, we will slowly release our dysfunctional behaviors.
12. Gradually, with our Higher Power's help, we learn to expect the best and get it.



## The Problem

Many of us found that we had several characteristics in common as a result of being brought up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional household. We had come to feel isolated, and uneasy with other people, especially authority figures. To protect ourselves, we became people pleasers, even though we lost our own identities in the process. All the same we would mistake any personal criticism as a threat. We became alcoholics (or practiced other addictive behavior) ourselves, or married them, or both. Failing that, we found other compulsive personalities, such as a workaholic, to fulfill our sick need for abandonment.

We lived life from the standpoint of victims. Having an over developed sense of responsibility; we preferred to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. We got guilt feelings when we stood up for ourselves rather than giving in to others. Thus, we became reactors rather than actors, letting others take the initiative. We were dependent personalities, terrified of abandonment, willing to do almost anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to be abandoned emotionally. Yet we kept choosing insecure relationships because they matched our childhood relationship with alcoholic or dysfunctional parents.

These symptoms of the family disease of alcoholism or other dysfunction made us 'co-victims', those who take on the characteristics of the disease without necessarily ever taking a drink. We learned to keep our feelings down as children and kept them buried as adults. As a result of this conditioning, we confused love with pity, tending to love those we could rescue. Even more self-defeating, we became addicted to excitement in all our affairs, preferring constant upset to workable relationships.

This is a description, not an indictment.



# THE SOLUTION

**The Solution is to become your own loving parent.** As ACA becomes a safe place for you, you will find freedom to express all the hurts and fears you have kept inside and to free yourself from the shame and blame that are carryovers from the past. You will become an adult who is imprisoned no longer by childhood reactions. You will recover the child within you, learning to accept and love yourself.

The healing begins when we risk moving out of isolation. Feelings and buried memories will return. By gradually releasing the burden of unexpressed grief, we slowly move out of the past. We learn to reparent ourselves with gentleness, humor, love and respect.

This process allows us to see our biological parents as the instruments of our existence. Our actual parent is a Higher Power whom some of us choose to call God. Although we had alcoholic or dysfunctional parents, our Higher Power gave us the Twelve Steps of Recovery.

This is the action and work that heals us: we use the Steps; we use the meetings; we use the telephone. We share our experience, strength, and hope with each other. We learn to restructure our sick thinking one day at a time. When we release our parents from responsibility for our actions today, we become free to make healthful decisions as actors, not reactors. We progress from hurting, to healing, to helping. We awaken to a sense of wholeness we never knew was possible.

By attending these meetings on a regular basis, you will come to see parental alcoholism or family dysfunction for what it is: a disease that infected you as a child and continues to affect you as an adult. You will learn to keep the focus on yourself in the here and now. You will take responsibility for your own life and supply your own parenting.

You will not do this alone. Look around you and you will see others who know how you feel. We will love and encourage you no matter what. We ask you to accept us just as we accept you.

This is a spiritual program based on action coming from love. We are sure that as the love grows inside you, you will see beautiful changes in all your relationships, especially with God, yourself, and your parents.

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change,  
the courage to change the one I can,  
and the wisdom to know that one is me.*