



ComLine

Adult Children of Alcoholics
Experience, Strength & Hope

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What Does ACA Recovery Look Like?

A program friend told me that ACA recovery is basically the antithesis of the Laundry List. That makes a lot of sense to me since I so easily relate to most of the characteristics. I say “antithesis” rather than “opposite” because the opposite of the Laundry List is that “Other Laundry List.” For example, the opposite of “We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism,” is “We became hostile and

overly critical.” The antithesis of this item is simply “we are not frightened by angry people or personal criticism.” For me, reading the Laundry List this way is a good yardstick to check my progress. Thanks to friends I’ve made in ACA, I know what recovery looks like. Now, if I only knew what it felt like! Haha! Oh well. Progress, not perfection. That’s the ticket.

- Andy A.

News from the ACA Literature Chairperson

Hello!! So many new and exciting things are happening for ACA. With the publication of our ACA Fellowship Textbook (formerly known as the ACA Handbook) we are experiencing a wonderful transformation of our fellowship! I see each book order and have some involvement of mailing them out. We're learning as we go! We have gone from not having a book to selling out our first 2200 hand numbered 1st Editions in a record 120 days. We still have 1st Edition books available, it's just the numbered copies that are sold out. We've sent book orders out to every part of the US (including Hawaii and Alaska) and to various International members in Estonia, South Africa, Japan, Denmark, Spain, Mexico, Canada and more! Repeat orders are common and the quantity ordered each time keep growing and growing! Some changes in the works:

- We're revamping our webpage to simplify the book order process.
- We offer no shipping costs when U.S. orders total 25 books or more and International orders total 40 books or more.
- Our current ACA approved literature pieces are being updated to match our book language and content.
- New literature is under development (to support meetings, members, etc.).
- A workbook to accompany the ACA Fellowship Text is under development.

We apologize for the delay in sending our regular literature items. If you ordered goods, but have not received them, please send an e-mail to literature@adultchildren.org and provide us with the details. Currently only volunteers process orders. If you live in Orange County, California or in any of the surrounding cities and would like to join our volunteer team, please do not hesitate to contact me. We are trying our best to handle your orders as soon as possible. Our book and literature order forms (U.S. and International) are currently being modified. By the printing of this ComLine they will be updated. Please e-mail me for a copy to snail mail orders or download the newest order form from the website. If you'd like to contribute your thoughts, ideas or suggestions on what ACA Literature does or can do for you and your meeting, please let me know. I look forward to all input and ideas. I am blessed to be a part of this magnificent program during this wonderful growth stage. Thank you for allowing me to be of service. -Michele L. literature@adultchildren.org

ComLine Subscriptions

ComLine is the monthly publication of ACA’s World Service Organization, mailed to subscribers and 7th Tradition supporters.

Get ComLine for Free!

Current and past issues of ComLine are available free for download in Adobe .pdf format. To access the files for viewing or downloading, go to www.adultchildren.org, click on “Online Forums”, then on “The ACA ComLine”.

Print Subscriptions

For those who wish to receive ComLine via postal mail, we request a donation to offset our cost of printing and postage. Rates shown are in U.S. Dollars:

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Canada/Mexico: \$16/year (USD)
International: \$24/year (USD)

Please send your mailing information and donation to:

**ACA WSO, PO Box 3216,
Torrance, CA 90510.**

For subscriptions outside the U.S., donations can be made through PayPal.

For details, contact treasurer@adultchildren.org.

Communicating with WSO

WSO Board and Committee members do their best to be responsive to inquiries.

Please be patient with us—we are all volunteers and aren’t always able to respond as quickly as we’d like. E-Mail is usually the fastest and best way to reach us.

Various points of contact are shown in the “Whom to Contact” section.

You can also write to us at ACA WSO, PO Box 3216, Torrance, CA, 90510, USA. Please do not send Express Mail. We don’t pick up the mail

every day, so it’s a waste of money for you, plus it requires us to make a special trip to the Post Office during business hours.

Thanks, and we look forward to hearing from you!

Whom to Contact

For information on:

Local Meetings
General Information, Meeting Registration.....
Literature Inquiries and Orders.....
ComLine Subscriptions and Inquiries
Article Submissions for ComLine.....
ACA Handbook/Big Book.....
Hospitals and Institutions information.....

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ComLine@AdultChildren.org
ComLineArticles@AdultChildren.org
ACAHandbook@AdultChildren.org
HandI@AdultChildren.org

Coming Attractions

Update on the soon-to-be published 12-Step Workbook
“ACA And The Workplace”
“Relationships”

2007 ACA Convention News

Perhaps you have a topic you’d like to see explored– write to:

ComLineArticles@adultchildren.org

“It is by going down into the abyss that we recover the treasures of life. Where you stumble, there lies your treasure.”

-Joseph Campbell

ACA WSO Goes to Chicago

The ACA WSO Board of Trustees traveled to Chicago Jan. 27-28 to workshop the new ACA Fellowship Text (Handbook) and to also discuss 12 challenges facing ACA as we move forward in rebuilding our fellowship from the group level up. These challenges include clearing up the confusion and diffusion of the ACA message in addition to the challenge of reducing the “drop-out” rate for new ACA members.

During the past decade, the ACA fellowship has seen a significant decline in meetings and groups. We have survived this decline and there are many signs of fellowship growth. New meetings are started each month and 7th Tradition donations to the WSO are steady. In the past three months, group donations have averaged \$600 a month. These 7th Tradition dollars help fund the production of ACA literature and outreach to groups and Intergroups.

The Chicago trip was one of WSO’s first outreach trips in recent years to visit with groups and Intergroups. The main focus of the

trip was to discuss the new ACA Fellowship Text. The 12 Challenges facing ACA were developed by me based on input from oldtimers, group members and adult child professionals in addition to ACA trustees.

The Chicago groups paid for my hotel stay and I paid for my own plane ticket to help save ACA WSO funds.

The Chicago groups were welcoming and excited about hearing from ACA WSO. About 50 people attended the day-long get together in Lincolnshire just outside Chicago. On Saturday, Jan, 27, we began at 11:30 a.m. and went until 4:30 p.m., reading the ACA Fellowship Text (Handbook), discussing ACA’s challenges and discussing ACA WSO reaching out to groups and Intergroups. There was great discussion and an eagerness to learn how to improve efforts to strengthen groups and reach to other adult children.

There were people who drove from three hours away for our day-long workshop at the St. Gregory Epis-

copal Church. Some ACoA members drove from Wisconsin and Indiana as well. Marg M. did a tremendous job in getting the word out about the ACA weekend. Marge had ordered 20 new ACA books and sold all she had on hand – about 12 books -- and took orders for the rest. I also passed out some rough drafts of the proposed ACA Twelve Step Workbook. There is great interest in the workbook in addition to the new ACA book.

We have survived as a fellowship and there is a rock-solid group of ACA members in Chicago and elsewhere waiting to take us to the next level as a fellowship.

I encouraged the Chicago-area groups to keep it going. I suggested that they meet again to discuss rebuilding ACA in their area.

For a copy of the Chicago workshop hand-out and CD, contact Omer G. at acahandbook@adultchildren.org.

Omer G
– ACA Handbook Committee Chairman

“We have survived as a fellowship and there is a rock-solid group of ACA members in Chicago and elsewhere waiting to take us to the next level as a fellowship.”



ACA Fellowship Text– Chapter 12: Relapse

“WE CAN RELY UPON ACA TO FULFILL US EMOTIONALLY AND SPIRITUALLY IF WE WORK THE PROGRAM. BY FACING OUR PAIN AND FEARS, WE EXPERIENCE A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING THAT TRANSFORMS US.”

To order your copy of the ACA Fellowship Text (Handbook), go to:

<http://www.acawso.org/BigRedBook.htm>

and choose from the options there (online or postal orders)

-OR-

Use the order form on page 6 of this issue

In ACA, we have stories of relapse and the importance of getting back to the program if relapse occurs. An ACA relapse always features a reenactment of our role while growing up in a dysfunctional family. We recreate the same fear, self-hate, and abandonment of our childhood. A relapse can take many forms, but all ACA relapses have this central feature.

An ACA relapse can bring a return of self-harming behavior. The behavior can include emotional eating, drug use, compulsive sexual relationships, or other harmful behaviors. We can become an aggressive authority figure and emotional persecutor while in relapse. The critical inner parent can return. We may also find ourselves in a controlling relationship without baseline honesty or trust. We can feel used.

Relapse in this program can be subtle, gradual, and insidious. While there are different forms of relapse, the setback has the common characteristics of willful control, manipulation, dishonesty, and turning away from a Higher Power. Sometimes a single act can be considered a relapse. At other times we consider ourselves in relapse when we have engaged in an unhealthy behavior for many months with no honest effort to change our behavior. Some warning signs of relapse can include: not talking about things that upset us; keeping secrets; failing to get a sponsor; attending meetings but failing to work the ACA Twelve Steps; working only the Steps of another Twelve Step program while attending ACA; withdrawing from the fellowship and isolating; replacing our old addiction with another equally destructive one; skipping meetings or quitting meetings; seducing a newcomer; substituting another Twelve Step group or enlightenment group for this one; or pronouncing ourselves cured.

By pronouncing ourselves cured, we wrongly conclude that ACA is a limited program that addresses only certain areas of our lives such as abuse. In reality, ACA is a way of life that can improve every aspect of our lives. We can rely upon ACA to fulfill us emotionally and spiritually if we work the program. By facing our pain and fears, we experience a spiritual awakening that transforms us. We continue to attend meetings year after year so that we can grow spiritually and pass on what was given to us. The reward is emotional sobriety and a personality change that moves us away from being a fear-based person to God-centered person. With our personality change, we claim our true identity.

- my parents weren't available to me, I can be.
- my parents couldn't admit that I had needs, I can.
- my parents were in denial, I don't have to be.
- my parents couldn't meet my needs, I am learning to.
- my parents couldn't say "I love you" when they were sober, I can admit my love without being drunk.
- my parents used alcohol to hide their feelings, I can admit that I have feelings, and I can let them in,
- my parents used alcohol to avoid listening to that still, small voice, I can sit still and listen, even when I'm afraid of what I will hear.
- my parents didn't treat me as a real person, I am learning to recognize and admit my own worth,
- my parents used alcohol to avoid change, I can be open to possibilities without panic.
- I was raised in a home of denial, I don't live there anymore.

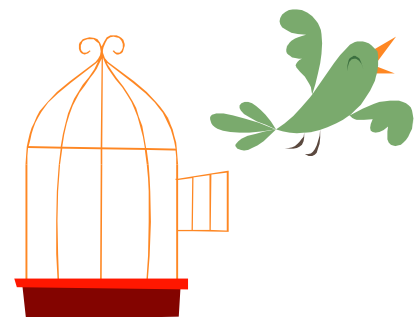
Sharing Recovery– Faith's Share

When I'm feeling like I'm having trouble keeping afloat, it helps to know I'm not alone and to share the humor with people I feel can really relate and understand. It keeps me laughing (and crying sometimes at the same time too) while I'm doing my doggie paddle. It took me a long time to realize and still I need to be reminded. Every once in a while, I'll think I'm actually drowning in my emotions and I'm not going to make it. Then I'll go to my meeting and someone will tell me amidst my hands full of kleenex paper and blowing my nose (in other words - messy, flailing, arms waving, drowning/choking behavior)... that I'm actually doing it... I'm feeling my feelings and allowing myself to recover.... Suddenly, I'll find myself looking down and realize.... I'm not drowning... it just feels really bad... or.... it felt really bad in the past... and now I can allow myself to feel it... Then it will occur to me... oh yeah...

I'm naturally buoyant (my higher power was always holding me up) and that my little tiny strokes are taking me in the direction I want to go... albeit.... very very slowly.... lol.... and I'll finally get for that moment, "Cool...I'm swimming and didn't even know it . That's usually when I stop my "flailing" and feel a bit sheepish... hee hee.... As another old timer once said to me, "Religion is for people who fear going to hell... Recovery is for people who have been to hell and back..." (Something like that....) Like Bradshaw said, "We did it" "We survived." Surviving as helpless children was the most difficult part. In ACOA, I find part of my work, allowing myself to mourn the childhood, I wish I had. Then as I release those feelings, I get to finally feel the joy of being an adult. As an adult, that means I get to have some control and power in keeping my IC safe, and in taking the time to

learn how to gently re-parent my IC and let her have fun, explore and grow in the ways she desperately needed. As a child, I had no power over my environment. My "real" childhood, so to speak, may be over... but the fun, silliness, creativity, messiness... exploration has just begun for my IC. And it's finally becoming safe because I'm working hard to make it a safe place. I'll keep doing the strokes and letting my inner child play. Thanks all for the company.

Much gratitude,
Faith





Adult Children of Alcoholics - World Service Organization

P.O. Box 3216
Torrance CA 90510
www.adulthood.org

ACA WSO Book ORDER Form - United States

ACA Fellowship Text (Steps & Traditions Book)

Working title has been the "ACA Handbook"

Limited First Edition Book

Hardcover: 8 3/4" x 5 3/4" x 1 7/8" - 37 oz Softcover: 8 1/2" x 5 1/2" x 1 5/8" - 32 oz

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Send payment by check or money order payable to:
ACA WSO. On-line orders can be processed at:
www.acawso.org by clicking on the PayPal logo.

Thank you!

The Mis-Steps

February 2007

1. We declared that we were beyond help, that our lives had become ruined forever.
2. Came to assume that any power greater than ourselves would only make things worse.
3. Turned our lives and our will over to people, both in and out of the programs, who would reject and abuse us.
4. Made an inventory of everything those people probably wouldn't like about us.
5. Put ourselves down endlessly in front of our friends, family, and business associates, and at meetings in as many Twelve Step programs as possible.
6. Were entirely embarrassed, and isolated ourselves in the hopes that all these defects of materials and workmanship would be overlooked.
7. Modestly declined to improve our lives, so that we still belonged.
8. Made a list of those we had harmed, and became willing to feel guilty towards them all.
9. Tried to fix those people's lives, except when to do so would involve leaving them alone.
10. Continued to hate ourselves on the deepest possible level and when we somehow did make any spiritual progress, promptly denied it so as not to upset anybody.
11. Sought through hot air and manipulation to correct all others in recovery, and to feel as God-like as possible, preying only on those with no will or power to carry us out.
12. Having largely missed the point of the actual Twelve Steps, we immediately set about showing everybody how totally aware we, alone, were, and how they really should have listened to us all along.

WANT AD

ACA WSO needs your help.

We're looking for volunteers to help in the following ways:

Administrative/clerical work -

Data input and report creation to support the ACA service committees.

Board Meeting Minutes transcription.

Database creation and design -

We're accepting bids for this work now.

Shipping/order fulfillment - Looking for volunteers to assist with all aspects of shipping our products (from reporting, inventory, packing and shipping).

If you feel a call to service - join one of our committees:

Hospitals and Institutions Outreach/Communications (domestic & international)

Literature Committee (which includes the Book Committee & the publication of ComLine)

Historical preservation (Historian).

For any interest please send an e-mail to:

info@adultchildren.org or write us at

PO Box 3216

Torrance CA 90510

Thank you!

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