Become Your Own Loving Parent

2018 ACA World Convention Sponsored by ACA WSO, and Hosted by the Greater Toronto, Ontario Canada and Area Regional Intergroup

What a year it has been planning the 2018 ACA World Convention. We can’t believe it’s almost here.

We are expecting 400 to 500 ACA members from 10 countries at this year’s convention in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. We’re meeting at Holiday Inn Yorkdale, and this promises to be the biggest ACA Anniversary party ever!

All our volunteers have put an enormous amount of time in planning this, thank you so much. We are feeling like we are having a baby – in fact, quadruplets – and these babies are coming…ready or not. We are going to love and accept all of them (Promise 1).

We are being gentle and loving with ourselves and our inner children. Fears of failure and success are leaving us (Promise 10).

We’re looking forward to meeting more of our global ACA family!

In Loving Service,
2018 ACA World Convention Team

ACA PSAs Finally a Reality

Bill D., Chair MPSC

The ACA WSO Member Public Service Committee has created two audio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for distribution to any medium where MP3 files can be played for the public to hear.

These public outlets can include radio stations, both broadcast and internet based, TV and cable channels, social media, etc.

For TV and cable outlets, you may want to provide a logo or something visual they could put on the screen while the audio plays.

Click on following link to go to the website page that contains the 15- and 30-second PSA: acawso.org/2018/03/02/aca-psas-available-for-download-in-mp3-format

Please contact information@acawso.com for more info or to report placements of the PSA.
Have you checked your list items?
2018 ACA World Convention – Sponsored by ACA WSO, and Hosted by the Greater Toronto, Ontario, Canada and Area Regional Intergroup

Checklist

✓ Have you checked your passport and other identification requirements for crossing the border?
   www.acaworldconvention.org/travel/crossing-the-border
   www.acaworldconvention.org/travel/international-travel

✓ Have you registered for ABC April 26 – 27 as a delegate or guest?
   www.acaworldconvention.org/abctop/abcmealsandregistration

✓ Have you a voice, and are willing to be a part of the change in our fellowship? Are you ready to improve the effectiveness of your local business meetings?

✓ Are you ready for the next teleconference on April 8 at 12:30 pm EST?
  Dial in number is 712-770-4010, access code 281687#.

✓ Are you registered for AWC Apr 27, 7 pm - Apr 29? ($60 CDN)
   www.acaworldconvention.org/awc-top/awc

✓ Are you registered at the hotel? Rooms are going fast – $159.99 CDN while quantities last.
   www.acaworldconvention.org/venue/hotel-information to place your reservation online.

✓ Do you need help with lodging? Consider meeting a new ACA friend and share a hotel room, or ask if there is a Toronto fellow traveler host available for a free room.
  Email: acasharedroom@gmail.com

✓ Have you pre-ordered your meals? Be gentle and take care of yourself, you are going to be busy at all the workshops, and it is a great time to enjoy fellowship.
   www.acaworldconvention.org

✓ Have you requested your favorite song for the Saturday dance?
   www.acaworldconvention.org/awc-top/songs-requests

✓ Have you polished your voice for the share stage on Saturday evening? Are you ready to sing a song, read a poem, or share other talents? (Consider miming, juggling or sharing a convention aha...)

✓ Have you checked out the exciting lineup of speakers and workshops?
   www.acaworldconvention.org/awc-top/awc-program
   A few hints: Light of Stone – The reading of an Original ACA Play, from Lost to Found: Protecting Oneself from the Dangers of Being in a Relationship with a Narcissist, 12 Steps in 12 Minutes, Couples in ACA, and much more...

✓ Can you help us? We are looking to check the interest level on our workshops for planning purposes. We have a survey link, goo.gl/forms/tUx1gwNE1ORjvSX2. Check it out.

✓ Have you connected with your inner child and your inner parents? They won’t want to miss all this fun. We have skipping ropes, arts, crafts and lots of giggles.
  Email us at acaworldconvention@gmail.com if we can support you in any way.
I wasn’t always doing a great job of being a loving parent to my Inner Child. Heck, I didn’t even know I had been emotionally broken into pieces. And when I grew up, I realized I had an ever-present internal conflict between good and evil, right and wrong, moral and immoral, and insane urges that drove me to self-medicate that I now see as my addiction. You know, that self-will run riot was a part of me (the angry, vindictive, massively abused Inner Child) that always showed up to destroy all the good things I had methodically done to get to be an adult that others respected.

Hard to be my own loving parent when I didn’t have a model to follow. Thanksgiving in my childhood home inevitably ended in the Thanksgiving turkey taking a final flight (yes, turkeys do fly, at least into the tops of trees), only this time it was across the dining room, leaving gravy stains on the walls, looking a lot like blood splatter from an old television movie.

In ACA, I finally got the message in the meeting readings, the one that begins, “The solution is to become your own loving parent.” It was then I gave myself permission to construct my own theoretical loving parent. What do you suppose one of those would look like? Huh? What would a loving parent do? So I create my vision of my preferred parent, the one I would have sold my soul to have had – what that parent did, what that parent said, how that parent treated me.

Then I actually had to morph into that ideal parent for my Inner Child who had been abused by others and by me, too. I did a guided imagery exercise, and that’s where I first met Little Bear. Little Bear was wary. I couldn't blame her. I had to be the adult and reach out, apologize to her, promise to love, protect, and listen, talk, and provide for her needs and wants within reason. I had to promise to hug her each day for the rest of our lives. I had to promise I would heal her by guiding her through the grieving of her childhood losses and traumas to finish up each emotional life-stage that she had not yet completed.

When I asked Little Bear what she wanted from me, she looked up at me eye to eye. She said, “This is all I want from you: Love me. Protect me. Hear me. Hug me. Heal me.”

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**Become My Own Loving Parent**

*by Pamela M.*

**CHANGE**

The very moment we become aware of each distorted belief or behavior pattern, we gain the freedom to create a new, healthy belief to take its place.

*by Geri G., Kamiah, Idaho*
The ACA Promises may be our fellowship’s best kept secret.

Hidden on page 591 of the Big Red Book, they come long after the Problem, the Laundry List, and the countless impacts of childhood trauma. But these Promises offer something essential to every recovering adult child: hope.

For years in my ACA recovery, hope hung by a thread. It was a huge relief to find others who had experiences like mine, to feel their understanding and caring as I fumbled out painful memories at meetings.

Lonely and alone

But at first I remained lonely and alone. Every time I spoke, I wondered: would people turn away? Even worse, did any of us in the rooms really have answers? It truly felt like the blind leading the blind, all of us learning lessons we missed in childhood. Who could tell me now how to be a good husband, a good father? What help could a Lost Child like me give anyone else?

Two ACA Promises helped me find freedom—a life far beyond my old hurts.

Promise 4, “Our ability to share intimacy will grow inside us,” focuses on the ability to be truthful with ourselves and others. It is a gentle invitation to leave our emotional bunker, and mingle safely and authentically with others.

Promise 5, “As we face our abandonment issues, we will be attracted by strengths and become more tolerant of weaknesses,” helped me come to terms with my suppressed fear of rejection.

I became a Lost Child because my family felt dangerous. My oldest brother raged constantly at my drunken mother. My next brother became her enmeshed confidant. I checked out. Better, I thought, to hide in a corner.

“Safe” isolation

In a sense it worked. But my “safe” isolation carried a heavy cost. As I left home, I had no idea who I was, or how to share my inner life. When anyone tried to be my friend, I went on high alert—“Don’t come any closer.” By my 30s, the Lost Child had become a Lost Soul. I used alcohol to lower the walls that separated me from others. My hunger for intimacy led me to cold, addictive sex.

When I finally hurt enough to try ACA, I found a whole new model for connecting. People were honest and open. We cried and bared our fears, hurts, resentments and shame. I accepted my friends’ struggles, and that helped me accept my own. I risked moving out of isolation, and as the Solution says, my healing began.

Connecting in ACA has a magic unlike any other friendships. Authenticity is everything. If I’m not fine, I say so. If I’m angry, I don’t smile meekly. This new honesty is liberating, but it has a downside. Once someone truly knows me, I can’t minimize rejections when they happen. People are saying “no” to me, not some false mask I’m wearing.

But as Promise 5 says, I eventually worked through my abandonment fears. I learned that even if individuals might abandon me, my Higher Power never does. I can endure loss, so I stopped fearing it as much. Gradually I found friends, and a wife, whose decency and caring I trust completely. I can be vulnerable and secure.

I thank God daily for ACA. Long ago, when I was too frightened and alone to have hope, ACA gave me 12 Promises. Together they said I do not have to be alone, and I don’t have to surrender my truth or dignity to others. On every Promise, ACA has delivered.
When I first heard this promise read at an ACA meeting, I had no idea what it meant! All my life I believed I was inherently flawed because of my weaknesses, and I let myself off the hook as a regular human being. Then someone at our meeting said we eventually become more tolerant of our own weaknesses and that made sense to me.

As my recovery grew, I started to understand what it meant to be attracted by strengths instead of being attracted to people who were weak or needy. I started being attracted or drawn to people who had healthy boundaries and took care of themselves.

Now, I’ve learned that being more tolerant of weaknesses means to stop being so judgmental of myself and others. That is, I allow people to just be – weaknesses and all – without trying to fix them. They have their own Higher Power, just as I do. When I first came into recovery, I thought it was my job to fix and rescue others.

For me, facing my abandonment issues meant understanding what happened to me and how it affected me. Once I did that, I could stop abandoning myself by always rescuing others and putting their needs before my own and by being hard on myself. Through my recovery process, I have learned that self-abandonment is no longer my “go-to” behavior. I’ve learned to replace old behaviors with healthy new behaviors. Instead, I am more attracted by strengths and tolerant of weaknesses. I get it now!

My name is Cliff. I have been in recovery programs since 1989. I have only been in ACA for about 4 years, but I have solved more of my problems in these last 4 years than I have in the other 69 years.

I came to the reality that, for me, I have been trying to fill that rather large hole in my soul with everything I could put my hands or mind on. I realized that that hole was part of me, just like a scar. It should not shame or label me in any way. I don’t have to fill it with ANYTHING. I am me – warts, faults and all – and I am lovable and good enough, just like I am. This realization has freed me from past and future attempts at fixing my past; it’s impossible!

I will live the rest of my life with my head held high and a smile on my face. Good luck to the rest of the people out there who were shamed and abandoned as children. There IS hope.

“Promise Five

“As we face our abandonment issues, we will be attracted by strengths and become more tolerant of weaknesses.”

“Promise Six

“We will enjoy feeling stable, peaceful, and financially secure.”
Hi there. I’m an ACA and my name is Rahul. Today is one of those days when I’m experiencing the benefits of working the ACA program and felt this would be a good time to share it. It astounds me as to how much I have changed over the last three years.

**An inner division**

I came into the program with an inner division that was tearing me apart emotionally. I belong to a culture where parents are treated as gods and to question them was an act of sacrilege. For many years, I struggled with a nameless emotion towards them. I would tell myself that I didn’t hate them, yet found myself bursting out into fits of rage and feeling guilty afterwards. I would feel suffocated if I didn’t say anything and ashamed if I did, and this division had been killing me from the inside.

**Stating my truth**

Coming to ACA gave me the vocabulary and environment to state my truth – that there was abuse growing up, both physical and emotional, and that I actually had so much anger towards my parents for what they did to me. I spent my first two years sharing nothing other than my uncontrollable desire to see my parents suffer as I had because of them.

During this time, I experienced my shame, abandonment, denial, depression and anger. It is only recently that I’ve started to feel some sense of love for them as well.

I once thought that you could either love someone or hate them. It was this fear of losing control of my emotions and black and white thinking which had kept me trapped in a place of emotional turmoil for many years prior to ACA.

ACA has helped me become aware of, and work through many of my emotions which kept me trapped in those thoughts and actions. As a result of feeling these emotions, feelings of love and affection have also been released. I was afraid that anger was the only emotion that was there and that letting it out would certainly cause someone to go to jail.

**A position of safety**

But, with the support of the ACA program, I’ve been able to release my feelings in a safe and supportive environment, and realize that anger, shame and depression are not the only feelings inside me.

Somewhere deep inside (a place which has taken me three years to get to), there is a genuine ability to intimately connect with others, including my parents – and I have begun to foster that side of me. I’ve learned to draw my emotional boundaries and am now learning to have a relationship with them from a position of safety. This is Promise 4 coming true in my life. In other areas as well, I find that I now enjoy deep,
Inner Child  
(continued from page 6)  
rich and satisfying relationships with others.  

Intimacy and core recovery issues  
Romantic relationships still remain an area of work for me. As suggested in Chapter 13 of the BRB, I’ve been away from romantic relationships for the last two years, to be able to work on my core recovery issues. As much as I’d like to share the glee and gratitude that has followed, I’m afraid I don’t have many happy outcomes to share yet.  
The more I explore this area, the more I realize how deeply damaged my sense of intimacy is, and how much afraid I am of intimate relationships. I find myself unable to trust people in relationships – something which, as I am now learning, has its roots in my strained relationship with my mother in early childhood. Like I said, even though I don’t have a happy ending to share in this area, I will state that there is something new in this area which I never had – hope.  

A new vision for the future  
When I came in, my vision of old age was a neglected death as an old recluse with long nails. While I still don’t see myself as a jolly old man with four grandkids, I certainly don’t feel afraid of dying in painful abandonment. There’s hope that this will get better – how, I don’t know, but it will. My dreadful and precise visions of the future are being replaced with a hopeful, albeit vague sense of well-being.  

Sharing gratitude  
As I write this, I feel the urge to reach out to whoever is reading this and evoke in them the sense of gratitude I feel right now. I feel that language is a very limited construct in being able to transmit emotions.  
I want to end with this – I don’t know who you are, where you are, or what your situations are in life. However, if you relate to the ACA Problem and the ACA Solution appeals to you even remotely, please do find a co-sponsor and work the program before giving up on it.  

Overcoming doubt  
I consider myself a thoroughbred skeptic and it has taken me years to come to just trust the program, let alone work it. However, I can honestly say that looking back, I am glad I stayed.  
This has worked in my life and I am grateful to the program and fellowship of ACA. Today, I am free from the prison which I had lived in for more than 20 years – and my inner child likes the world.
Welcome to the Delegates

The delegates to the conference will gather in the morning, and will participate in an orientation session. This training will familiarize the delegates with the tasks of the first day of the conference. General procedures, terminology and the role of the delegate are examined. Key participants are identified. Suggestions about reporting back to their groups are offered. There is an opportunity for the delegates to raise questions.

We will take a look at the Delegate Binder. The Reports and the Proposals will be covered in the course of the conference. At this time we will look at the OPPM, and particularly at the Concepts and the Commitment to Service. There will also be a focus on accepting reports.

Introduction to Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall introduce themselves and each will offer their Statement of Purpose. They may also describe the committees that they chair or oversee and extend to the assembled an invitation to committee participation.

Call to Order by the Board Chairperson

The conference shall begin with an Opening Prayer and the reading of the ACA 12 Traditions, the Commitment to Service and the Meditation of the Day. Selection and introduction of the ABC Chairperson will take place. Any important procedural stipulations will be noted and agreed upon. Key participants will be identified. The WSO Secretary shall offer the minutes from the 2017 ABC, to be accepted. The WSO Treasurer shall offer a financial report, to be accepted.

Committee Reports

Various committees and subcommittees will report on their activities, since the last ABC. They may also indicate current and future committee projects. These reports are somewhat general in nature. If there is a facet of their work that merits more detailed reporting, they may offer a special report.

Special Reports

In the course of the conference, there will also be more in-depth reporting on the work of certain committees. For instance, with the large scale rewording of the OPPM that is underway, key passages may be presented for the delegates to better understand. The Literature Committee may announce new publications that are being developed. Since new committees and subcommittees have been created, they may need to be fully introduced.

While the committee reports tend to be more straightforward, the special reports will offer the delegates a better opportunity to ask questions about the committee work.
Welcome Back to the Delegation

The delegates will reconvene in the morning, participating in another orientation. This training will familiarize the delegates with the tasks of the second day. General procedures, terminology and the role of the delegate are examined. There is an opportunity for the delegates to raise questions.

The main tasks of the second day will be voting on proposals. There is a need for this to be accomplished in an orderly fashion. To that end, the training will focus on the procedures laid out in *Roberts Rules of Order*. We shall also review of the 12 Concepts of ACA World Service.

Call to Order by the Board Chairperson

Day 2 of the conference shall begin with an Opening Prayer and the reading of the ACA 12 Traditions, the Commitment to Service and the Meditation of the Day. Any important procedural stipulations will be noted and agreed upon. Key participants will be identified.

Discussion and Voting on the Proposals

On the agenda will be those proposals, which have met the requirements: a 2/3rds affirmative vote of all groups that offered an opinion. The outcome of the discussion and voting at the conference will be a recommendation to the Board – either to consider the adoption of the proposal, or not.

Throughout the proceedings, with constant adherence to *Roberts Rules of Order*, the voice of the minority opinion shall be given thoughtful consideration.

New Business

As time allows, there may be an opportunity to explore new business that has bearing on the functioning of the ABC, and will affect the fellowship as a whole.

Ratification of the WSO Board of Trustees

Confirm continuing Trustees and those, if any, who have been nominated, since the last ABC.

Adjourn the Conference

Afterward: Board of Trustees Meeting

After the conference, the Board will conduct a meeting, to which all are invited. The time and place will be announced.

At this meeting they affirm the officers and committee chairpersons, and they review the motions from the conference, for possible action. The meeting closes with the Serenity Prayer.
Delegates Corner
ACA Annual Business Conference (ABC) Attendee Suggestions

Dear Delegates,

In just a few weeks, many of us will be attending the ACA World Service Annual Business Conference (ABC) in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The ballots to discuss and vote on were voted on by individual ACA groups and submitted to WSO by February 28, 2018.

Visit our website – often
The website www.aca-worldconvention.org has information about many facets of the ABC experience – updated regularly. In mid-April, the Delegate Binder (our conference program) will be available at www.wsoaca.org/delegates. Soon we will post the results of the Ballot Proposal voting, and right now you can find Travel from Overseas and Crossing the Borders, information for all members traveling from other countries into Canada. Don’t forget your passport.

1. Consider finding a Conference Buddy
A Conference Buddy is a returning delegate who can be a mentor – before, during or after the conference. If you are a new delegate who would like to correspond or speak to someone about the conference experience, write to us for contact information at dtsc@awawso.org. And if you would like to share your Conference experience with another attendee, please write to us there, as well. Make sure to visit the members at the DTSC Welcome Table.

2. Consider serving on a Committee
Throughout the conference, you’ll hear a lot about committees, most of which would appreciate your involvement. All are welcome to participate. The best way to start is to ask a couple of questions. This might be your first opportunity to get involved, as the DTSC is compiling a list of Frequently Asked Questions for future conference-goers. Help the committee by submitting a question to dtsc@awawso.org.

3. Get familiar with the process
Both mornings of the conference will begin with a Delegate orientation session, focusing on the tasks of the day. Thursday will focus on the Delegate Binder and accepting reports. Friday will include voting on Proposals and new business. Throughout the conference, the proceedings will be governed by rules and accepted practices. Prepare yourself by learning more about the process at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tF_G4gYA-JpyUgvU812X6aEhUZ-vQ4a_c7/view?usp=sharing.

4. Consider reporting
All delegates attend the ABC as a representative of a group or Intergroup. You may have agreed to, or just feel compelled to report back to your group. Now may be a good time to consider what to report on and how.

While Ballot Proposals are the primary means by which individual groups interact with our World Service Organization, there is much more to the conference than the proposal voting.

As to how – whether it’s a traditional report, up to the minute emails or a blog post – there are many ways to report back. And, actually, the folks at home can follow along with the proceedings by dialing in to a broadcasting at: 712.432.0075 ext. 427266#.

We are looking forward to meeting more of our ACA friends and family.

In service,
Erin D., Vice Chair Delegate Training Sub Committee (DTSC)
Delegates Corner
How to Elect a Delegate to Represent your Group at the ABC

WSO encourages all registered groups (meeting, Intergroup, Region) to have a voice at ACA’s Annual Business Conference (ABC). The group may select one group member to attend as a voting Delegate. A member can suggest to their group that they be selected, by group conscience.

A Delegate only needs to be an active member of ACA, interested in being of service to their group. Delegates will learn much about the World Service Organization; will offer their group’s opinion and perspective; will vote on motions that come before the delegation, and report back to their group.

A Delegate Training program is in place to help Delegates more fully understand, both the process and their role. To register, at no cost, as a Delegate, go to www.acaworldconvention.org (click on the ABC tab).

We need your support to strengthen our fellowship and to continue carrying the message to other Adult Children. We look forward to seeing you in Toronto.

In service,
The ACA WSO Board of Trustees

Suggested Commitment to Service (BRB p. 601)

I perform service so that my program will be available for myself, and through those efforts, others may benefit. I will perform service and practice my recovery by:

1. Affirming that the true power of our program rests in the membership of the meetings and is expressed through our Higher Power and through group conscience.

2. Confirming that our process is one of inclusion and not exclusion; showing special sensitivity to the viewpoint of the minority in the process of formulating the group conscience so that any decision is reflective of the spirit of the group and not merely the vote of the majority.

3. Placing principles before personalities.

4. Keeping myself fit for service by working my recovery as a member of the program.

5. Striving to facilitate the sharing of experience, strength, and hope at all levels: meetings, Intergroups, Regional committees, service boards, and World Services.

6. Accepting the different forms and levels of service and allowing those around me to each function according to their own abilities.

7. Remaining willing to forgive myself and others for not performing perfectly.

8. Being willing to surrender the position in which I serve in the interest of unity and to provide the opportunity for others to serve; to avoid problems of money, property, and prestige; and to avoid losing my own recovery through the use of service to act out my old behavior, especially in taking care of others, controlling, rescuing, being a victim, etc.

9. Remembering I am a trusted servant; I do not govern.

The Traveler

The Traveler is a monthly eZine filled with ACA resources, news, events and other information to help you on your journey. Your information will not be shared outside of ACA World Service Organization, and you can opt out any time. If you’d like to sign up to receive The Traveler, please go to: www.adultchildren.org/newsletter