

## The ACA 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 will learn to expect the best and get it.

Source: ACA Big Red Book

“ACA’s Laundry List rang a bell deep in my heart. This work allowed me to finally recognize, then release, the underlying message that I did not count....”

—David M., AA & ACA

“For me, AA has always been about the disease of disconnection, from myself, from others, and from a Higher Power. AA has shown me the path of connection, and ACA has helped me to more deeply heal the pieces within myself which were so disconnected due to my traumatic upbringing.”

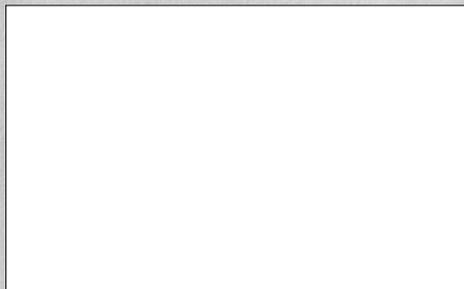
—Pam D., AA, ACA & Al-Anon

“Don’t be a white-knuckling emotional mess. You need this.”

—Carmela R., AA & ACA

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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. As examples, many raised in families with mental illness, prescription addiction, and harsh discipline, or who were given up for adoption, say they relate to our meetings and program.



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# Finding Emotional Sobriety

“Many oldsters who have put our AA “booze cure” to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. ... Peace and joy may still elude us.”

—Bill W.

© A.A. Grapevine, 1958



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# Traits of Adult Children

We are isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.

We became approval seekers and lost our identity in the process.

We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.

We become alcoholics, marry alcoholics, or find other compulsive life partners.

We feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.

We are addicted to excitement (drama).

We confuse love and pity, tending to love those we can pity and rescue.

We have “stuffed” our feelings from traumatic childhoods and cannot feel or express our feelings.

We judge ourselves harshly and have low self-esteem.

We are dependent personalities and are terrified of abandonment.

–Tony A., 1978

## Is Something Missing in Your Recovery?

Recovering alcoholics owe their lives to the 12 Steps.

But over time, many of us battle a vague sense that something is missing in our sobriety. Even as we go to meetings, defects and twisted emotions stubbornly remain.

If you grew up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional family, there is hope. Adult Children of Alcoholics®/Dysfunctional Families is an anonymous 12-Step fellowship that helps you find Emotional Sobriety—the deep healing of mind, body and spirit first envisioned by Bill W.

In ACA, children of dysfunctional families experience unconditional self-love, with the help of our Higher Power. We slowly release the distorted thinking and discontent that are legacies of our upbringing.

## Your Past Still Matters

Recovering alcoholics focus on living in the present: One Day at a Time. But if your childhood was twisted by the chaos, neglect and abuse that are common in alcoholic households, ignoring the past can be a deadly mistake.

Without help, adults with this history get caught in a tragic generational cycle. They experience chronic shame and self-doubt learned in childhood. Many, but not all, become alcoholics or addicts. They struggle with personal relationships, at home and in the workplace. In their pain, they often mistreat those closest to them.

These repetitive life patterns are described in Traits of Adult Children. If you identify with these traits, you may be affected by family dysfunction, alcoholism, or a comparable childhood trauma.

## ACA Can Help

**ACA is not a substitute for alcohol sobriety, but it strengthens our recovery.**

Bill W., who himself suffered deep childhood trauma, predicted in 1956 that a new fellowship would someday use the 12 Steps and a caring community to heal long-buried “psychic damages.” In ACA, much as Bill W. envisioned, we face our past together and stop reenacting what was done to us.

Using ACA’s tools and adapted steps, we accept powerlessness over our hurtful past and use a blameless inventory to heal our behavior today. Drawing on our Higher Power, we treat ourselves with love and kindness, and form nurturing relationships with people who value us for who we are.

With Emotional Sobriety, we release our childhood Traits and experience ACA’s 12 Promises. At long last, we know “happy, joyous and free.”