



ComLINE

First Quarter 2020

Experience, Strength, and Hope

In This Issue

Concepts of ACA – Study Group 1

To My Child 2

Recognizing the Voice of Your Inner Critical Parent . . 3

Healing Slogans in ACA . . . 4

ACA Every Day 5

Family Tree Art Workshop . 6

Order from Chaos 8

Loving Parent Guidebook: Pre-publication Review . . . 9

Join Us to Study the 12 Concepts of ACA!

A Concept Study Group was established in August 2019 to discuss the 12 Concepts of ACA service and to share experience, strength, and hope about the concepts at all levels of ACA service.

In these monthly discussions, we discuss the language used in the 12 Concepts of Service to gain greater clarity, and we explore their application based on personal perspective and individual experience.

When challenges arise in ACA service, the concepts can provide better understanding.

So far we have discussed Concepts I-IV. At our next call we plan to discuss Concept V.

Concept I began with the discussion of exploring the relationship between responsibility and authority, but also the importance of delegating to our trusted servants.

In our second meeting, we examined the difference between the collective conscience of our fellowship (Concept I) and its effective conscience (Concept II), realizing that this difference is

characterized by the people who actually actually attend and speak up in our business meetings.

Then, while Concept III reminds us that effective leadership requires our trusted servants be given the right to make decisions, Concept IV establishes our right of participation at all service levels throughout our fellowship structure.

All are welcome to join in these conversations – the more ACA members participating, the richer our discussion becomes! The study group coordinates its activities via Slack and meets via ZOOM.

Meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month, for an in-depth discussion of one concept. Our next meeting is on Sunday, January 22, 10:30 am EST.

To join us, visit <https://zoom.us/j/283490458> The Meeting ID is 283 490 458.

To find your local call-in number by location, go to <https://zoom.us/ac3j5Blsoa>. 🌱

About the ACA ComLINE

The ACA *ComLine* is published quarterly by Adult Children of Alcoholics® World Service Organization, with one free report of the Annual Business Conference (ABC). The *ComLine* is intended as a communication line from WSO to the fellowship of ACA around the world, and as a forum for the fellowship to share recovery. The *ComLine* slogan is “*Experience, Strength, and Hope.*” The opinions expressed are those of the individuals writing the articles and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ACA fellowship or WSO.

© 2020 Adult Children of Alcoholics® Dysfunctional Families World Service Organization, Inc. This edition may be reprinted in its entirety for free distribution to anyone in Adult Children of Alcoholics or other Twelve Step programs. Otherwise, no portion or portions may be reproduced without the written consent of the copyright owner:



ACA WSO, Inc.
1458 East 33rd Street
Signal Hill, California
90755 USA
adultchildren.org
adultchildren.org/comline

To My Child

I found you layered in the memories and tucked away, hiding from those angry eyes. I didn't know you were waiting for me to return. You have found a safe place, and I have come to see you now and hear your story of survival.

I will take the time now to sit with you and listen. Unraveling the mystery in this autumn light. The sounds of our past glowing in these orange and yellow colors. Our story held together and mixed with pain and grief.

You speak to me in a rhythmic way. Chest drumming and booming out the Pain.

And it echoes now throughout the night, into the woods where I find you,
safely held by the Oak trees

and surrounded by leaves and streams that whisper a calm melody of love and light.



**"I found you
layered in the memories..."**



The Power of Recognizing the Voice of your Inner Critical Parent

by Ben B.

Having grown up in a family where the *modus operandi* was “don’t talk, don’t trust, don’t feel,” I was almost barred from looking honestly at my inner critical parent. It was dictating so much of my experience, but it had its own wall of protection: my shame.

When I started to come out of denial and actually heard and listened to this inner critical voice, its foundation started to crumble.

While enjoying my cup of coffee one morning, it hit me how much joy this voice had

robbed me of throughout my life.

From that moment, I made a decision to become a friend to this inner critical voice. This was a decision done with the help of my inner loving parent.

Since then (especially if I make a mistake of some kind), when the inner critical voice appears, I’m proactively ready and willing to transform that critical voice into the tender, kind and compassionate tones of my loving parent.

I might ask myself, “What would my loving parent say about this situation?”

Now I gratefully recognize my loving parent’s voice to be sane and rational, and a voice I can respect and count upon.

Since I now easily recognize the internal voice of my critical parent, shame has less of a foothold. It is an act of learning to love myself when I consciously decide to hear from my loving parent. My loving parent is so proud of me and for the work I have done in ACA. 🌱

What would my loving parent say about this situation?



Healing Slogans in ACA

by Christine B.

Most of us are familiar with the slogans developed through the years in Alcoholics Anonymous, such as *One Day at a Time*, *Let Go and Let God*, and *Keep it Simple*.

Although these slogans could apply to Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunctional Families as easily as to alcoholics, I have found other slogans more helpful to replacing the voice of an Inner Critical Parent with the affirmation and love that an Inner Loving Parent can provide.

My ACA meeting has made up cards with various slogans that help us remember certain concepts that underlie our program. We place the cards in a circle on the floor during our meetings so we can see them as we share. Here are three of my favorites:

There is no healing without feeling

ACA says that the return of feelings shows that the second stage of recovery has begun. We know that as children, we denied our feelings and as adults we often have trouble naming feelings or feeling them. The yellow *Twelve-Step Workbook* has a useful list of feelings on page 103.

When I came into program, I had three words for feelings: happy, mad, sad. Gradually, I learned that “lonely” was a feeling. So were “Ashamed,” “Disappointed,” and “Betrayed.”

As I reparented my Inner Child, I came to experience feelings of “Joy,” “Safety,” and “Curious.”

The pause between sharing is where the healing happens

As a child, I recall the stunned silence between something I said or did before my alcoholic father would react in rage. Those silences were like the calm before the storm. Many of us in ACA are still uncomfortable with silence. When I’m in a meeting and silence falls over the room, I try to remember that no one is doing something “wrong,” that silence is a sign of grace, not a coming storm. We are invited to trust that others are processing what they have heard in the meeting. We can view the silence as a comfort rather than with fear.

You are not alone

As children, we often felt alone, even in a chaotic frenzy of family fighting. We felt we didn’t fit in, no one understood us, we were not listened to. In recovery, we realize that we share the 14 Laundry List Traits with every other person raised the way we were. How can we be alone when we are in the company of fellow Adult Children? When we are tempted to feel that old loneliness of our childhood, we can reach out to a Fellow Traveler and connect with our family in recovery. We can remember that in recovery, we are never alone. 🌱

Step One

“We admitted we were powerless of the effects of alcoholism or other family dysfunction, that our lives had become unmanageable.”

Step Two

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

Step Three

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God.”

ACA Every Day – Digital Daily Affirmations

Our meditation book *Strengthening My Recovery* contains affirmations written by adult children, for adult children, and now they are available as a free daily reminder of our shared experience, strength, and hope.

You can receive these affirmations with a simple online subscription. This free service also includes our monthly Traveler newsletter. The Traveler includes announcements, news and events from the global ACA Fellowship.

Along with The Traveler you'll receive a link to download our quarterly *ComLine* newsletter

which is also provided without charge. The *ComLine* includes ACA members' shares on the ACA Steps, Traditions, and Promises.

Previously published issues going back to 2010 are available for free download.

To receive daily affirmations and monthly ACA news, go to <https://adultchildren.org/newsletter/>.

Your voice is important. To find out how to get published in the *ComLine*, visit <https://adultchildren.org/comline>. 🌱



Angels Among Us — Photo by Mardi M.

ACA Family Tree Art Workshop at MT Retreat a Huge Success

September 13-15, 2019. Montana held their second MT ACA Retreat by beautiful Flat-head Lake. Forty people attended from six states and everyone left feeling refreshed and rejuvenated

We had wonderful speakers, meditations, workshops, recovery music and the hilarious skit “Crazy-Making Inside Bob’s Head.”

Then, there was a night-time, full-moon campfire by the lake with Nancy S. playing guitar and singing all genres of music that inspired many of us to sing along.

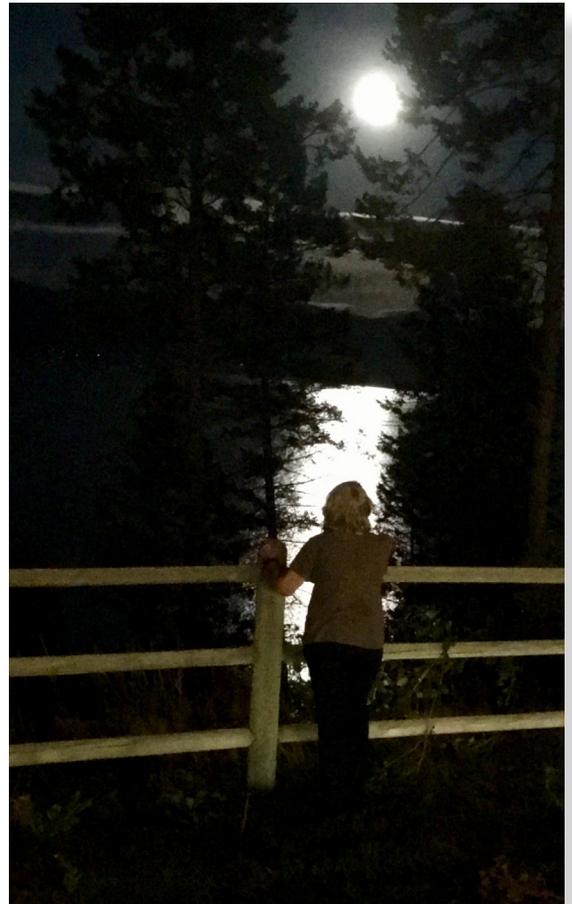
Emily L. and Signe F. created a “Family Tree Art” workshop complete with markers, colored pencils, crayons, ribbon, buttons, lace and much more!

She provided each of us with a very large sheet of paper with a tree trunk, with several outward-stretching limbs. The rest of the tree was left empty so that we could fill it with our own creations. There were two separate sessions available in case we needed more time to complete our illustration of recovery.

Each of us is a priceless pearl, and each day of ACA recovery is like a diamond glittering in the sun. We can further our healing and provide service by sharing our art.

The ComLine newsletter staff invites you to share your creative expression.

Email litstaff@adultchildren.org to find out how your share can make a difference. 🌱

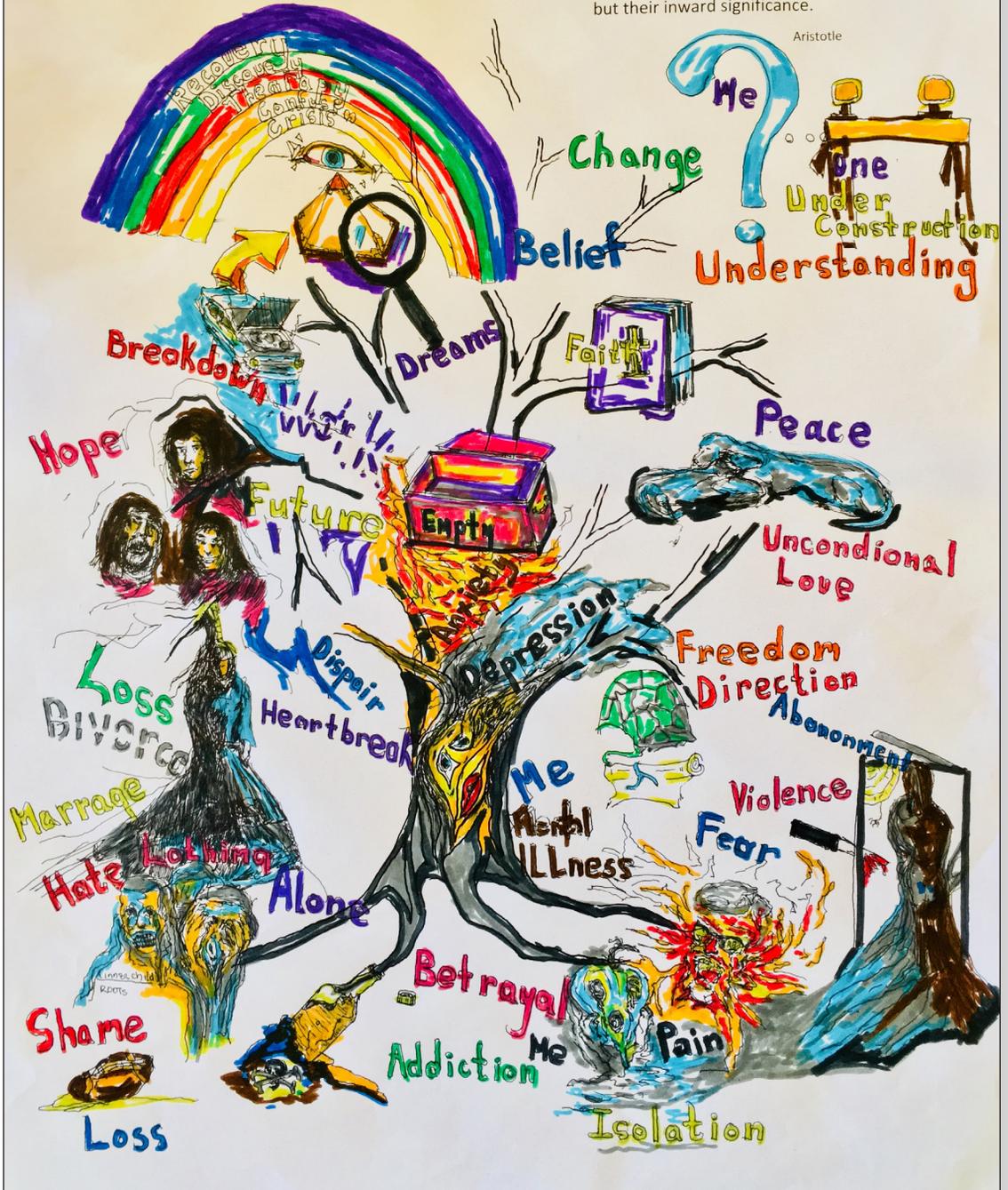


My Family Tree

Workshop Art by Jim K.

The aim of art is to represent, not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.

Aristotle



Order from Chaos: Letting Go to Embrace a New Future

by MT

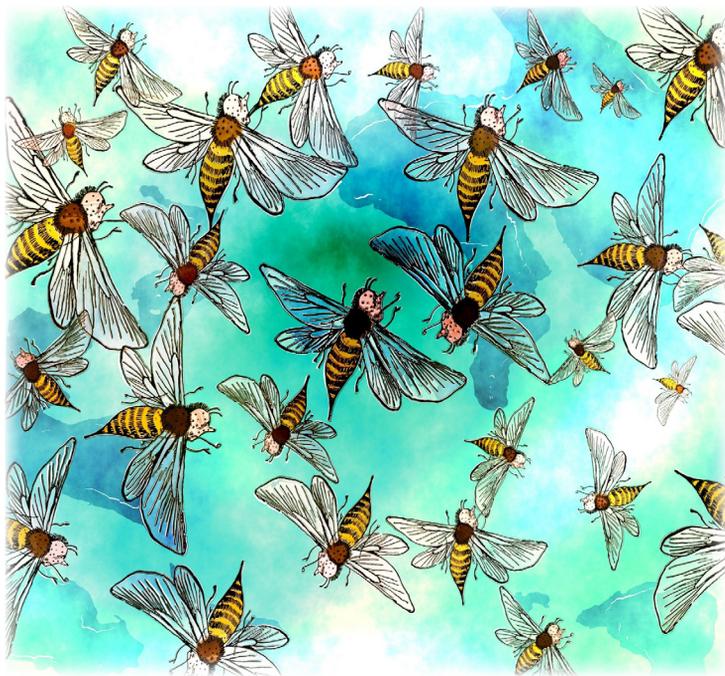
We are all in motion, all the time, and this share is all about moving – moving from the past, to the present, and the choices we make as we move into the future.

In 2007 I left my job and home of 25 years to move to another state for a promising position in a startup biotech company.

Now, the number 25 doesn't look like much; it occupies just a *tiny* bit of space, but upon sifting through a quarter century's worth of books, clothes I would never wear again, memorabilia, sundry collectibles, and a multitude of miscellaneous of *chotskies*, the small, innocuous number 25 swelled like an angry cloud of disturbed hornets under a blistering summer sun.

I was so overwhelmed. I thought to myself, "It would be easier to destroy this house than it would be to go through all this *stuff!*"

But I did it, and I learned a valuable lesson. Upon examining them, I discovered that most of my things were not necessary for daily living, and on reflection many of them



When we realize we are reacting to the past, we learn that we are merely reacting to the voices of our traumatic childhood. Fear of authority figures and the need to "people-please" will leave us.

began to illuminate my insatiable need for control.

My possessions had begun to possess me.

My need to control had begun to control me.

Objects kept on display merely to satisfy or impress others weighed on me like chains of captivity.

I viewed my belongings in a new light: what I needed, what I liked, and what

I wanted. I then plowed through decades of emotional baggage in less than a day.

This was the beginning of my learning the difference between self-indulgence and self-care.

This lesson resides within me still, and like a Loving Inner Parent, is now an infallible internal guide to help me discern what I *want* from what I really *need*. 🌱

Becoming Your Own Loving Parent Guidebook Available for Fellowship Review

The *Becoming Your Own Loving Parent Guidebook (LPG)* is out for initial pre-publication review!

The LPG will be available in for an extended beta-testing period, in which the fellowship can submit comments before it is submitted to a future ABC for Conference approval.

The LPG's content, questions, and experiential exercises will reflect broad fellowship experience. It is intended to serve as a guide both for meetings and personal recovery.

The LPG team is still gathering first-person accounts of reparenting, to convey the global fellowship's rich experience.

If you would like to contribute your experience, please visit <https://acawso.org/category/loving-parent-guidebook/> to learn more.

January 20, 2020 is the deadline to be considered for inclusion in this valuable book.

Thank you! 🌱



Questions and experiential exercises in the *Becoming Your Own Loving Parent Guidebook* will reflect broad fellowship experience.



ACA WSO, Inc.
1458 East 33rd Street
Signal Hill, California
90755 USA
adultchildren.org
adultchildren.org/comline