

Welcome to the Saturday 8 pm CET Fellow World

Travellers Meeting

Topic:

Relationships



## **ACA Serenity Prayer**

Higher Power,  
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.  
Thank you.

## 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 either became alcoholics (or practised other addictive behaviours) ourselves, or married them, or both. Failing that, we found other compulsive personalities, such as a workaholic, to fulfil our sick need for abandonment.

We lived life from the standpoint of victims. Having an overdeveloped 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. 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. 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 keep them buried as adults. As a result of this conditioning, we often 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 solutions.

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 re-parent ourselves with gentleness, humour, 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

## **THE TONY A ORIGINAL 12 STEPS**

1. We admitted we were powerless over the effects of living with alcoholism and that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could bring us clarity.
3. We made a decision to practise self-love and to trust in a Higher Power of our understanding.
4. We made a searching and blameless inventory of our parents because, in essence, we had become them.
5. We admitted to our Higher Power, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our childhood abandonment.
6. We were entirely ready to begin the healing process with the aid of our Higher Power.
7. We humbly asked our Higher Power to help us with our healing process.
8. We became willing to open ourselves to receive the unconditional love of our Higher Power.
9. We became willing to accept our own unconditional love by understanding that our Higher Power loves us unconditionally.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and to love and approve of ourselves.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power, praying only for knowledge of its will for us and the power to carry it out.
12. We have had a spiritual awakening as a result of taking these steps, and we continue to love ourselves and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## ACA 12 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 expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for a 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 Twelve-Steps 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 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, TV, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

## **ACA Bill of Rights**

1. I have the right to say no.
2. I have the right to say, "I don't know."
3. I have the right to detach from anyone in whose company I feel humiliated or manipulated.
4. I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
5. I have the right to make mistakes and learn from them.
6. I have the right to be wrong.
7. I have the right to make my own choices and decisions in my life; I do not have to feel guilty because someone does not like what I do, say, think, or feel.
8. I have the right to grieve any actual or perceived losses.
9. I have the right to all of my feelings.
10. I have the right to feel angry, including towards someone I love.
11. I have the right to change my mind at any time.
12. I have the right to a spiritually, physically, and emotionally healthier existence, though it may deviate entirely or in part from my parents' way of life.
13. I have the right to be honest in my relationships and to seek the same from others.

14. I have the right to take healthy risks and to experiment with new possibilities.
15. I have the right to ask for what I want.
16. I have the right to determine and honour my own priorities and goals, and to leave others to their Higher Powers.
17. I have the right to dream and to have hope.
18. I have the right to be my True Self.
19. I have the right to know and nurture my Inner Child.
20. I have the right to laugh, to play, to have fun, and the freedom to celebrate this life, right here, right now.
21. I have the right to forgive myself and to choose how and when I forgive others.
22. I have the right to live life happy, joyous, and free



## **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 failure 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 behaviours.
12. Gradually, with our Higher Power’s help, we will learn to expect the best and get it.

## **ACA Serenity Prayer (Long)**

Higher Power, 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.  
Grant me patience for the changes that take time,  
An appreciation for all that I have,  
A tolerance of those with different struggles,  
And the strength to get up and try again  
One day at a time.