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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.

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A Recovery First

ACA Speakers Invited to Annual AA Event

by Jody O.

On January 11–13, 2019, for the first time in the seventy-two-year history of the Tyler, Texas Annual AA Anniversary, two ACA members, Greg R., Austin, Texas and John T., Tyler, Texas, were invited to be the main speakers at the event. They were also asked to lead an ACA-focused workshop.

Engaging inner voices

Greg R. conducted the Saturday morning workshop titled, *Let’s Talk About That: Engaging Those Inner Voices With Compassion*. Approximately 70 attendees from AA, Al-Anon, and ACA attended this interactive workshop.

I paired up with a fellow who had been in AA for many years. During one exercise in particular, his eyes filled with tears, as he could not identify what he was feeling. He believed that his problems and their consequences were his fault, that he was *faulty*.

The three C’s

He was unaware of the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional alcoholic family. He had never heard the Three C’s of Al-Anon and Alateen regarding Alcoholism: “You

didn’t *cause* it. You can’t *control* it. And you can’t *cure* it.”

Under the ACA speaker venue, Greg R. told his story to those attending Saturday afternoon. As a member of AA, Al-Anon and ACA, Greg focused on how all three programs played together in his recovery.

The ACA component of his story addressed the integration of how our mind, body and spirit have been affected by growing up under the generational legacy of alcoholic, addictive, dysfunctional thinking and behaving.

AA is Greg’s bedrock. It is his foundation, and without it, nothing else would matter to him in his life.

Al-Anon helped him to let go of his efforts to fix other people and to develop compassion toward others.

ACA has been his *advanced degree* in recovery because it asks questions that AA and Al-Anon don’t ask, and justifiably so.

ACA provided another way to look at the damage Greg had done in his life, and has given him the opportunity to recover from that.

The *real* questions

At Sunday's Al-Anon sponsored morning breakfast, ACA speaker John T. spoke on what he called "the *real* questions."

As a member of Al-Anon and ACA, John broke down his story into three key questions, each followed by his ACA/Al-Anon recovery answers.

First: what happened to me?

The Problem: *insanity*.

He was infected by the effects of being raised in a dysfunctional family system. He developed coping strategies for surviving his lonely, isolated and abandon-riddled childhood.

John's coping strategies did not work for him as an adult. Instead, they created relational problems with self, others and a Higher Power.

Second: what could I do about it now?

The Solution: *sanity*.

Tools of the program

Go to meetings, work the steps, get a sponsor, use the phone and read the literature. These tools of the program are replacing unsustainable childhood strategies.

Third: how can I carry the message of ACA to those adult children who still suffer?

The Answer: *service*.

By practicing the principles of this program, we share our experience, strength, and hope with those who want help.

For most of the attendees this was the first time they were hearing an adult child's journey to recovery.

Special mention

A very special shout out to Rosemary N. of Tyler, Texas who inspired the 72nd Tyler AA Anniversary Planning Committee to welcome ACA, and invite ACA guest speakers Greg, John, and other adult children to join this recovery celebration.

Recovery, Unity, and Service

Rosemary reflected, "This huge AA event already included Al-Anon's participation. It was in the spirit of Recovery, Unity and Service that the 72nd AA Planning Committee voted unanimously to include ACA.

"Our Tradition 4 supports cooperation: 'Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other Twelve-Step programs.'"

"Tradition 5 encourages compassion: 'Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.'"

As AA, Al-Anon and ACA worked together to *carry the message* at the 2019 Tyler 72nd AA Anniversary, everyone had the opportunity to experience Bill W.'s 1958 vision and hope coming to fruition as he described it in *The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety*.

Step Four

"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Step Five

"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

Step Six

"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

How I Discovered Self Love

by Bonnie M.

In 1977, when I was five, my mother got involved with a charismatic alcoholic who isolated us on remote marijuana farms. One day, I smuggled in rolling papers and handed them to my teacher at the Baptist afterschool I attended. "Look, Jesus smokes pot, too," I said with a wide grin.

When Mom found out what happened, she marched me to the car. "You want to see me go to jail?" she asked. I shook my head no. "Then don't ever pull something like this again."

Mistakes seemed fatal

From then on, my Critical Parent scrutinized and judged my every move. I tried to be good. Mistakes seemed fatal, and I watched people's faces for signs I'd done something wrong.

Despite being accomplished, my inability to take a balanced inventory of myself left me feeling worthless much of the time.

Removing the sting

When I discovered ACA, the deceptively simple Step Four worksheets clearly and compassionately showed me how to inventory the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional home.

Looking at the events in my life as the "effects" of growing up in a dysfunctional home took away the sting. Rather than sit on high – like a judge – I got curious like a scientist.

The tragic fall-out of my childhood

What events led me to pick up the laundry list traits? How was I harmed? How did I harm others? Were there similarities? The worksheets showed me the tragic fall-out of my childhood.

Prior to ACA I'd done a lot of intensive personal work and was familiar with much of the information I listed on my worksheets. I knew, for instance, I had a tendency to play the "care-taker" role with friends in the unconscious hope they'd see me, love me, and want me around.

But I hadn't thought too much about how those relationships ended or how they revealed a pattern born in childhood.

Step Five crystallized the pattern

In fact, it wasn't until I went over the entries with my sponsor in Step Five that the pattern crystallized. I suddenly understood how I'd recreated the same painful dynamic with friends that I'd had with my mother.

A rush of freedom flooded my body. The self-blame for those difficult, failed relationships evaporated.

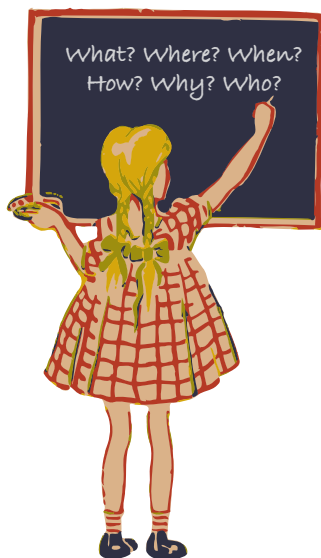
The Steps brought compassion

Steps Four and Five brought compassion for the little girl in me who'd tried to solve her unfinished "mom" business through other people. I took Little Bonnie by the hand and let her know that I, Big Bonnie, was there and would take care of her. I let her know I saw her, and I loved her. I told her I was so sorry she didn't get what she needed as a little girl.

Letting go of what didn't serve me

Steps Four and Five, difficult and demanding as they were, helped me begin letting go of what didn't serve me and call on qualities that did: clarity, self-love, forgiveness and the ability to take a blameless inventory of myself.

Today I no longer condemn myself, and I credit a lot of that to the insights gained by doing the Steps, particularly Steps Four and Five. I can inventory my thoughts and actions with balance and adjust my behavior not from a place of shame, but from self-love. I feel so grateful and know this would not have been possible without the ACA program and our powerful fellowship.



What I Do to Work My Program

by Christine B.

As stated in the [ACA Solution](#), “This is the action and work that heals us: we use the Steps; we use the meetings; we use the telephone.” By taking action and using these tools, it helps me to become aware.

A constant reminder

I find I am constantly being reminded how powerless I was over having grown up in an alcoholic home. My awareness of [The Laundry List Traits](#) has shown me very clearly what I learned in order to survive.

Set up to fail

My goal in ACA is to fulfill The Promises and live with joy and serenity. But, by continuing to act out The Laundry List Traits in my daily life, I now realize how these behaviors have set me up to fail.

I made the decision to *take my program on the road*, and to practice these principles in all my affairs.

Step work uncovered the family patterns in Step 4, and those family patterns showed me how I was affected.

1. The most important step for me is Step 10, and it suggests I integrate my laundry list traits. I followed the suggestions in Step 10 of the Yellow Workbook and came up a list of things I can do to support myself in my recovery. Here are some of them:
2. I keep my mouth shut and listen.
3. I tell/show someone I love him/her.
4. I ask for help and accept it.
5. I put the focus on someone else instead of me.
6. I reach out to another person in recovery.
7. When asked to take on a project, I say “Sure, I’d be glad to” instead of “Let me think about it.”
8. I apologize and mean it.
9. I pause when I become agitated.
10. I do not argue, debate, or give unwanted advice.
11. I don’t try to fix someone else.
12. I set/honor a boundary.
13. I stand up for myself without fearing judgment.
14. I ask my inner child what she needs from me today.



The hardest part

For me, the hardest part of this program is to reparent myself. How can I “hear” the voice of a loving parent? For me, one idea was to write down the messages I wished I had heard as a child.

How can I invoke the voice of that loving parent today when I am afraid, lonely, embarrassed, or feeling inadequate?

I wrote it down

I began by writing down some of the messages I know I would have loved to hear as a child: I love you. You are loveable just the way you are. I will take care of you. Everything is going to be ok.

Then, I decided to go a bit further and was even more specific.

These are some more of the specific messages I wish I had gotten from my parents, and what I believed a loving parent would provide:

Getting down to specifics

I wanted to be asked how I was feeling and to have them really listen to the answer, help me face my fears and not catastrophize. I wanted to hear that my feelings were normal, and my feelings wouldn't kill me.

I wanted them to recognize my gifts and talents and help me to develop them. I wanted to see what a healthy relationship looks like.

I wanted to learn how to resolve conflict without getting mad or running away. I wanted to know I could get mad and they would still love me. I wanted to be guided to develop

“
I wanted to hear that my
feelings were normal, and that
they wouldn't kill me.
”

my own moral code and to have my parents reflect back to me when I acted consistently with that code.

I wanted them to provide places and people where I could make friends. I wanted them to encourage me to tell the truth and not keep secrets.

I wanted to be allowed to be vulnerable and to see them as vulnerable when appropriate. I wanted to be encouraged to find guides and mentors besides my parents and to set healthy boundaries and responsibilities and to follow through with consequences.

I wanted to learn when something was good enough and when to try harder. I wanted to learn to develop a sense of humor without sarcasm or judgment.

Today I am better at recognizing my feelings. I am still working on substituting a different message.

This takes practice. Thank you, ACA, for the tools you've given me to *work my program*.

Promise Three

*“Fear of
authority figures
and the need to
'people-please'
will leave us.”*

Promise Four

*“Our ability
to share intimacy
will grow
inside us.”*

Promise Five

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

I Could Not Save My Sister from Herself

The generational transfer of dysfunction is rampant throughout my family's history, where extreme violence to self and others is expected, and sometimes even considered "normal."

In 1980 I lost a brother to suicide. He was 22, I was 23. I blamed myself. I was mired in shame and blame. I had no coping skills, just concerned friends – including my mother – handing me pills and saying, "Take this, it will help." I took everything that was offered. Pills didn't help. Alcohol didn't help. My fledgling marriage shattered.

Now my sister has died. Depressed and in pain, she made the same choice my brother did 39 years ago.

Here is what I know: *the effects of being brought up in a dysfunctional family can be fatal.*

I have learned that self-love is not the same as self-sacrifice. I have learned self-forgiveness, and that I am not responsible for the choices

others make. Though I feel pain, I do not carry the burden of shame; nor do I carry blame.

A friend suggested I write my sister a letter. I share it with you today:

Dear C,

I can see you in your final mortal hours, having found the place within yourself that would allow you to let go forever. Knowing the loss we would feel – and feeling some of that loss yourself when you decided "now is the time."

You cried as you entered your world of permanent sleep. You knew I would forgive you, and I do. How could I not when I have stood at the edge of nothingness so often?

You told me – several times and in different ways. What was once inevitable has now happened, and you are gone from my life as I knew you forever.

I still have the feeling of your absence every single day. Tears come without warning and there is nothing I can do to stop them.

You are ashes now – in a box just like our mother. A and T will know this in a way that will bind you to their memory, as they will remember your allowing them to see and touch our mother's cremated remains, knowing that this box holds what was once a person.

Grief moves through me, over me, like waves on the sea. Sometimes I can't hear. Sometimes I can't speak.

As children I was left to care for you – sometimes for days. It was my job to keep you safe. I wake in fear – something has happened – my sister is not safe. She is dead. You are dead. I find small comfort in knowing my baby sister doesn't need me any more.

You will live on through your sons and grandsons – and most vividly in the memories of you I will cherish and nurture with all the love in my heart.

Good bye my dearest sister.

Love, B

I am so grateful for the support of my ACA friends, and for this program that has given me the tools to help me cope with this devastating loss as I surrender my will and life to my Higher Power.



Delegates Corner 2019 April

The Strength of the ACA Concepts

by Erin D., DTSC Chair, Pennsylvania

When we are beginning recovery, we are encouraged to work The Steps. As we continue, we learn the safety and spirituality of The Traditions within the group. Less known to us are **The Twelve Concepts**. As we prepare for the Annual Business Conference (ABC), the relevance of the Concepts becomes more and more evident. With these Concepts, we trust our Board members and Delegates to work together through the collective conscience of our whole fellowship while heeding The Commitment to Service. We honor the traditional Right of Decision (III) of each trusted servant to speak and vote, the Right of Participation (IV) and the Right of Petition (V) to the minority opinion.

By letting go of old, yet familiar fears, we find trust in each other through service and the upside-down triangle which puts the members first.

In an interview with Board member David McB., I asked what he found to be one of the common pitfalls groups can fall into. David answered: "Pitfalls happen when a group hasn't studied the 12 Concepts." My interview continued as David addressed the following:

Concept IV: Throughout our structure, we maintain at all responsible levels a traditional Right of Participation.

The Role of Participation

When at all possible, Substantial Unanimity (a two-thirds majority), should be the norm, though the exact percentage is determined by group conscience.

If a vote is too close, for instance, 51 to 49, table the vote unless the decision is essential. This is because if it is a major decision, tyranny of majority could occur.

For example: The forced move of a clubhouse. If substantial unanimity prevailed things would have resulted better as the group's new location would have had more member support

(7th Tradition donations). Unfortunately, the group closed down.

A good example was a 66/33 vote. Initially, the club struggled, but the decision worked because, ultimately, the 70% majority meant more members attended and contributed.

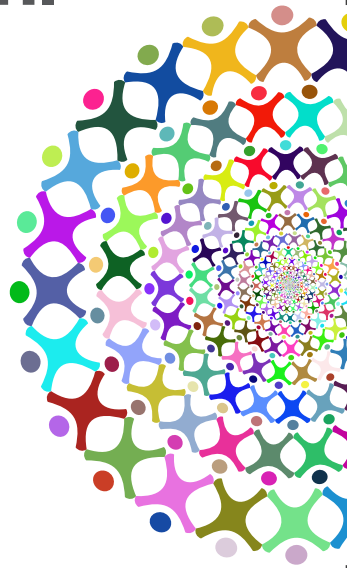
Concept V: Throughout our structure, a Right of Petition prevails, thus ensuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of grievances will be carefully considered.

Again, this concept warns us of the tyranny of the majority and how the two-thirds majority (substantial unanimity) is preferable to a simple majority. When there is a minority opinion in ACA, we always acknowledge the minority, *but we listen with different ears*. When a minority prevails to the majority, it speaks to the presence of a Higher Power in the room. We embody the spiritual principles of open mindedness, willingness and humility.

David then brought up what I found to be a little-known practice:

In many 12 Step fellowships the Chairperson does not vote unless there is a tie. This is to avoid the chairperson swaying the vote; alternately, the Chairperson votes last. This made a lot of sense to me, having seen in business meetings how newcomers to service would defer to older members when they weren't sure how to vote.

For your role as a Delegate at the ABC, please check out <https://www.acaworldconvention.org>, where weekly teleconference trainings for Delegates as well as remote voting trainings will be posted.



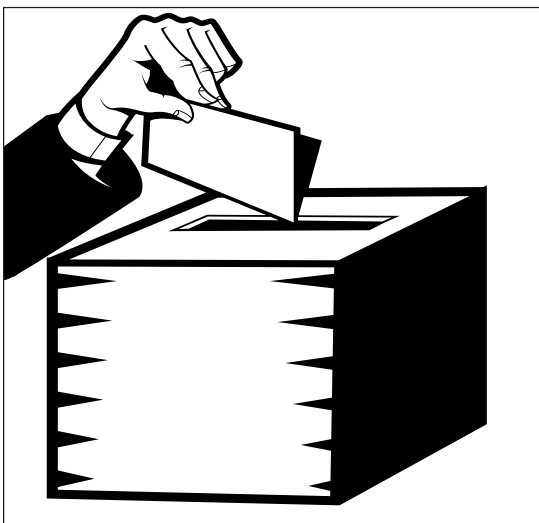
Seeking Applicants for the ACA World Service Organization (WSO) Board of Trustees

Do you think you can represent a segment of our fellowship that is underrepresented in the WSO? Do you have a compelling desire to make a difference in our ACA fellowship at the global level? Are you inspired to broaden your service commitment in ACA? Do you have what it takes to serve as an ACA WSO Trustee? Step up your own recovery as an Adult Child by joining others in world service as a Trustee!

The WSO started using a new process in 2018 to select new members of the Board of Trustees. The fellowship has expressed desires to have more input to the selection of new Board members. On December 9, 2017, the ACA WSO Board of Trustees responded, approving the creation of a Nominating Committee,

“...to vet and identify ACA members, from throughout the full range of ACA's world fellowship, whose skills, experience, wisdom, and program knowledge support their ability to be Trustees. The Committee is responsible for forwarding qualified candidates (nominees) to the Board for consideration and selection as Trustees.”

The Nominating Committee Mission Statement: to identify and nominate the best candidates for ACA trusted servant positions.



Our Committee Objectives are to:

- Provide a Committee separate from the Board that conforms to the By-Laws and the Operational Policies and Procedures Manual (OPPM).
- Use seasoned ACA members who are not Trustees to search, nominate, and vet Trustee Candidates.
- Open the nomination process to all qualified members of the fellowship.
- Use a standard set of qualifications for vetting candidates and communicating to the fellowship what path to follow to be a future candidate.
- Limit the annual seating of new Trustees to what the Board decides is sustainable.
- Give Groups, Intergroups, Regions, and Committees a voice in filling the Board. They participate by nominating or encouraging their qualified members to apply, encouraging members to build their qualifications so they can apply in the future, and attending the ACA ABC.

After a rapid stand-up in February and March of 2018, the newly formed committee submitted two vetted candidates for Trustees to the Board just prior to the ABC. This year, we have better procedures in place and have started the vetting process well before the ABC.

The Committee proposed two new members to the ACA WSO Board of Trustees in February 2019. More importantly, the Nominating Committee continues to search for future trustee candidates.

If you answered, “maybe” or “yes” to any of the above questions, have five or more years in ACA and have a strong program, check out the eligibility guidelines and application for Trustee positions at <https://acawso.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Application-for-Nomination-to-ACA-WSO-Board-of-Trustees-20180717.pdf>.

If you are not yet eligible, these guidelines will give you a clear path to get there! While not required, experience in finance and accounting, as a corporate secretary, or any other high-level non-profit experience is a definite plus.

Nominating Committee Positions Available

Not interested in Trusteeship and want a unique opportunity for service? That said, the Nominating Committee has two positions open.

One is for a member from outside the USA and Canada. The other position is for members from anywhere in the fellowship. One of the members must have six or more years of recovery in ACA; the other, two to three years. If you are interested, or to find out more about the qualifications, visit the Nominating Committee web page at <https://acawso.org/category/nominating-committee/>.

Program AWC 2019, Malmö, Sweden

Friday April 26th	Saturday April 27th	Saturday continued	Sunday April 28th
<p>ACA meeting "Getting the Courage to Change"</p> <p><i>Registration opens at 2 p.m.</i></p> <p>☪</p> <p>Opening Meeting "The Drama Triangle"</p> <p>☪</p> <p>Speaker Meeting "Surrender and then, Steps 1-3"</p> <p>Workshop "Know you are well, Part I"</p> <p>Enjoyable Experience "Spiritual Song Journey" *</p> <p>☪</p> <p>Enjoyable Experience "Liberating Dance"</p> <p>☪</p> <p>ACA meeting Midnight meeting</p>	<p>ACA meeting "Inner Child Meditation"</p> <p>Workshop "The Service Structure in USA and Canada"</p> <p>Enjoyable Experience "Kundalini Yoga" *</p> <p>☪</p> <p>Speaker Meeting "Self-love through Steps 4-5"</p> <p>Workshop "ACA European Network"</p> <p>Workshop "Grieving and Healing"</p> <p>☪</p> <p>Speaker Meeting "The Solution"</p> <p>Workshop "Drawing out your 4th Step Inventory with your other hand"</p> <p>Enjoyable Experience "Finding our Inner Child's Happiness – a Guided Journey" *</p> <p>☪</p> <p><i>Saturday's program continues in next column...</i></p>	<p>Speaker meeting "To integrate or Surrender? – Steps 6-7"</p> <p>Workshop "Forgiveness"</p> <p>Workshop "The Win WSO"</p> <p>☪</p> <p>Main meeting "Courage to Change"</p> <p>☪ <i>Surprise Banquet Dinner</i> ☪</p> <p>Speaker meeting "Making Amends in ACA – Steps 8-9"</p> <p>Workshop "Replacing Shortcomings with functioning habits"</p> <p>Workshop "Know you are well, Part II"</p> <p>☪</p> <p>Disco - Dancing</p> <p>ACA meeting Midnight meeting</p>	<p>ACA meeting "Inner Child Meditation"</p> <p>Enjoyable Experience "Hatha Yoga" *</p> <p>☪</p> <p>Speaker Meeting "Growing spiritually Steps 10-12"</p> <p>Workshop "Emotional Sobriety"</p> <p>Workshop "Why Traditions matter: Spiritual Principles and the Laundry List"</p> <p>☪</p> <p>Closing Meeting and remarks "Walking the Talk – Courage Applied"</p>



ACA Annual Business Conference & World Convention 2019

Please note: the program is subject to change. A detailed schedule with times/rooms will be available upon arrival. Also note that to participate comfortably in some experiential workshops (marked *), you might want to bring your own yoga mat. The last meeting ends 2.30 p.m. on Sunday.

The ACA Laundry Lists Framework

ACA cofounder Tony A. wrote the 14 Traits of an adult child of an alcoholic in 1978. From the descriptive power of the traits, ACA was born and created. In just 260 words, The Laundry List describes the thinking and personality of an adult reared in a dysfunctional family.

The Other Laundry List is briefly mentioned in the “ACA Fellowship Text” (BRB pp. 8-9), and a fuller explanation was presented at a convention in 2008. While the original Laundry List describes how we were affected by alcoholism and family dysfunction, it was pointed out that as adults, we might in turn, “act out” those traits by becoming victim-

izers. In other words, adult children, by adopting their parents’ behaviors, “become” their parents.

The Flip Side of The Laundry List and **The Flip Side of The Other Laundry List** detail how, through reparenting and practicing the ACA Twelve Steps, we might be freed from these effects. This Laundry Lists Framework is for ACAs who are ready to embark work on their survival trails.

Many thanks to the Thursday Night at Metro Wellness group meeting FL218 in St. Petersburg, Florida for this suggestion.

The Laundry Lists Workbook is available for purchase at <https://shop.adultchildren.org>, or through <https://www.amazon.co.uk/>.

TRAIT 1	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We became isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.</i>	To cover our fear of people and our dread of isolation we tragically become the very authority figures who frighten others and cause them to withdraw.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We move out of isolation and are not unrealistically afraid of other people, even authority figures.	We face and resolve our fear of people and our dread of isolation and stop intimidating others with our power and position.
TRAIT 2	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We became approval seekers and lost our identity in the process.</i>	To avoid becoming enmeshed and entangled with other people and losing ourselves in the process, we become rigidly self-sufficient. We disdain the approval of others.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We do not depend on others to tell us who we are.	We realize the sanctuary we have built to protect the frightened and injured child within has become a prison and we become willing to risk moving out of isolation.
TRAIT 3	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.</i>	We frighten people with our anger and threat of belittling criticism.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We are not automatically frightened by angry people and no longer regard personal criticism as a threat.	With our renewed sense of self-worth and self-esteem we realize it is no longer necessary to protect ourselves by intimidating others with contempt, ridicule and anger.

TRAIT 4	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We either become alcoholics, marry them or both, or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfill our sick abandonment needs.</i>	We dominate others and abandon them before they can abandon us or we avoid relationships with dependent people altogether. To avoid being hurt, we isolate and dissociate and thereby abandon ourselves.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We do not have a compulsive need to recreate abandonment.	We accept and comfort the isolated and hurt inner child we have abandoned and disavowed and thereby end the need to act out our fears of enmeshment and abandonment with other people.
TRAIT 5	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We live life from the viewpoint of victims and we are attracted by that weakness in our love and friendship relationships.</i>	We live life from the standpoint of a victimizer, and are attracted to people we can manipulate and control in our important relationships.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We stop living life from the standpoint of victims and are not attracted by this trait in our important relationships.	Because we are whole and complete we no longer try to control others through manipulation and force and bind them to us with fear in order to avoid feeling isolated and alone.
TRAIT 6	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and it is easier for us to be concerned with others rather than ourselves; this enables us not to look too closely at our own faults, etc.</i>	We are irresponsible and self-centered. Our inflated sense of self-worth and self-importance prevents us from seeing our deficiencies and shortcomings.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We do not use enabling as a way to avoid looking at our own shortcomings.	Through our in-depth inventory we discover our true identity as capable, worthwhile people. By asking to have our shortcomings removed we are freed from the burden of inferiority and grandiosity.
TRAIT 7	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.</i>	We make others feel guilty when they attempt to assert themselves.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We do not feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves.	We support and encourage others in their efforts to be assertive.
TRAIT 8	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We became addicted to excitement.</i>	We inhibit our fear by staying deadened and numb.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We avoid emotional intoxication and choose workable relationships instead of constant upset.	We uncover, acknowledge and express our childhood fears and withdraw from emotional intoxication.
TRAIT 9	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We confuse love and pity and tend to "love" people we can "pity" and "rescue."</i>	We hate people who "play" the victim and beg to be rescued.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We are able to distinguish love from pity, and do not think "rescuing" people we "pity" is an act of love.	We have compassion for anyone who is trapped in the "drama triangle" and is desperately searching for a way out of insanity.

TRAIT 10	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We have “stuffed” our feelings from our traumatic childhoods and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts so much (denial).</i>	We deny that we’ve been hurt and are suppressing our emotions by the dramatic ex-pression of “pseudo” feelings.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We come out of denial about our traumatic childhoods and regain the ability to feel and express our emotions.	We accept we were traumatized in childhood and lost the ability to feel. Using the 12 Steps as a program of recovery we regain the ability to feel and remember and become whole human beings who are happy, joyous and free.

TRAIT 11	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem.</i>	To protect ourselves from self-punishment for failing to “save” the family we project our self-hate onto others and punish them instead.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We stop judging and condemning ourselves and discover a sense of self-worth.	In accepting we were powerless as children to “save” our family we are able to release our self-hate and to stop punishing ourselves and others for not being enough.

TRAIT 12	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment and will do anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to experience painful abandonment feelings, which we received from living with sick people who were never there emotionally for us.</i>	We “manage” the massive amount of deprivation we feel, coming from abandonment within the home, by quickly letting go of relationships that threaten our “independence” (not too close).
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We grow in independence and are no longer terrified of abandonment. We have interdependent relationships with healthy people, not dependent relationships with people who are emotionally unavailable.	By accepting and reuniting with the inner child we are no longer threatened by intimacy, by the fear of being engulfed or made invisible.

TRAIT 13	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>Alcoholism is a family disease; and we became para-alcoholics and took on the characteristics of that disease even though we did not pick up the drink.</i>	We refuse to admit we’ve been affected by family dysfunction or that there was dysfunction in the home or that we have internalized any of the family’s destructive attitudes and behaviors.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	The characteristics of alcoholism and para-alcoholism we have internalized are identified, acknowledged, and removed.	By acknowledging the reality of family dysfunction we no longer have to act as if nothing were wrong or keep denying that we are still unconsciously reacting to childhood harm and injury.

TRAIT 14	Laundry List	Other Laundry List
	<i>Para-alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.</i>	We act as if we are nothing like the dependent people who raised us.
	Flip Side of the Laundry List	Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
	We are actors, not reactors.	We stop denying and do something about our post-traumatic dependency on substances, people, places and things to distort and avoid reality.