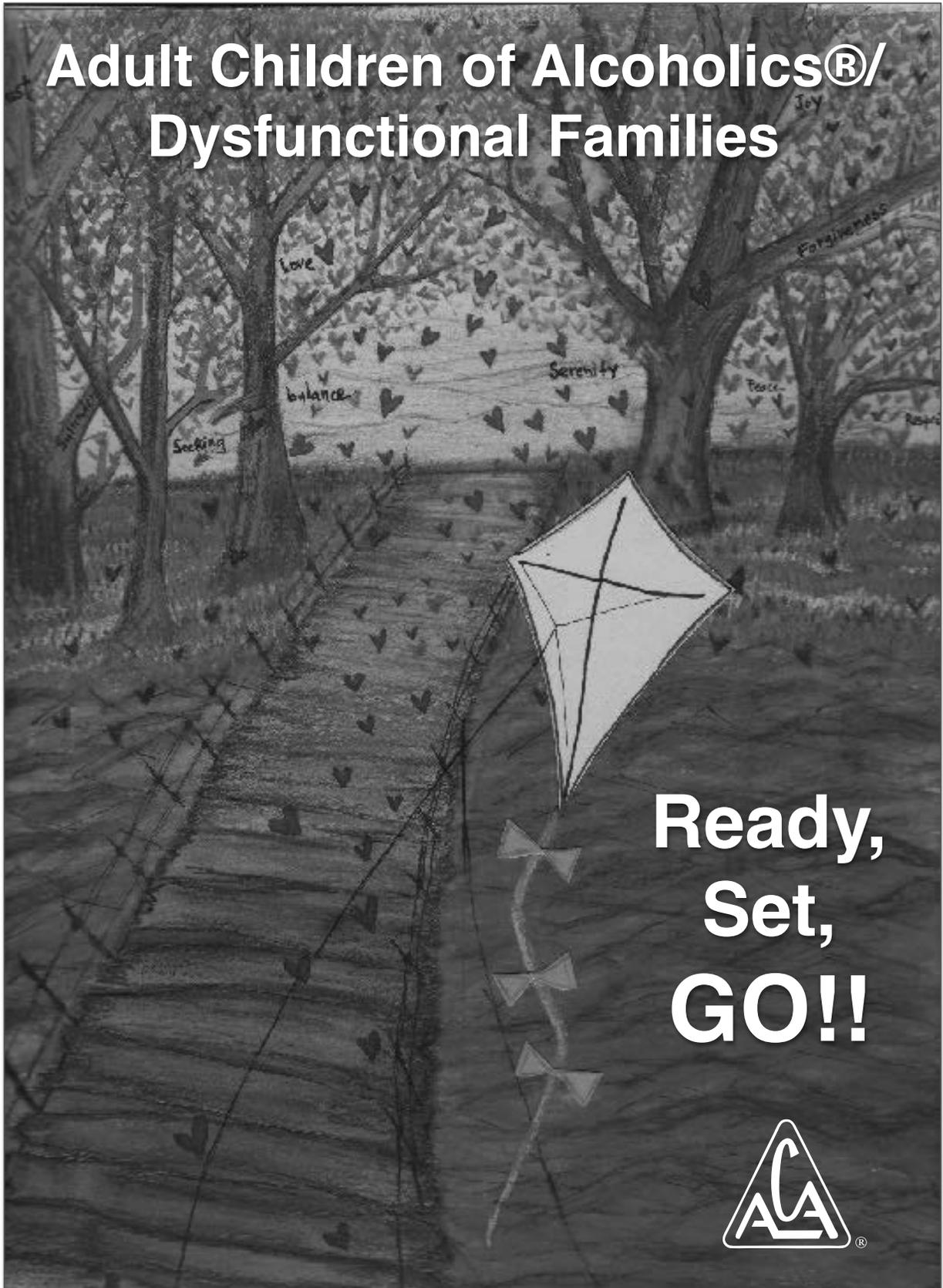


PLEASE NOTE:
“Ready Set GO!!”
Version 2 is now being
field-tested for
development as ACA
WSO Conference-
Approved Literature.
Copy for ACA
Use Only.
Draft

Send Comments to litstaff@adultchildren.org

Adult Children of Alcoholics®/ Dysfunctional Families



**Ready,
Set,
GO!!**



Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunctional Families

Ready Set GO!!

An Introductory ACA 12 Steps Starter Guide

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Part 1

Ready Set GO!! - ACA Readings



ACA Twelve Steps Stages

BRB p.280

Steps One through Three as **“Giving Up”**

Steps Four and Five as **“Fessing Up”**

Steps Six through Nine as **“Cleaning Up”**

Steps Ten through Twelve as **“Stepping Up”**

Inner Child Affirmations

BRB 329

It is okay to know who I am.

It is okay to trust myself.

It is okay to say I am an adult child.

It is okay to know another way to live.

It is okay to say no without feeling guilty.

It is okay to give myself a break.

It is okay to cry when I watch a movie or hear a song.

My feelings are okay even if I am still learning how to distinguish them.

It is okay to not take care of others when I think.

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Welcome to Ready Set GO!! Introductory Meetings of ACA

Ready Set GO!! are closed ACA introductory meetings. We meet to introduce ACA 12 Steps and the ACA program in a structured four week time frame. We recognize all our 12 Traditions for safety within the group.

Ready Set GO!! is an introduction for ACA newcomers to become acquainted with the ACA Twelve Steps and get clarity and an understanding of the ACA Program. Ready Set GO!! Introduces the experienced member to a renewal of their commitment to working their program through the ACA 12 Steps. Ready Set GO!! prepares members for when they will feel ready to go through the ACA 12 Step Workbook. Feel free to leave your fears and anxieties behind you as you experience these introductory meetings.

The material is taken from the ACA Big Red Book, the ACA 12 Step Workbook, and Strengthening My Recovery, the ACA meditation book. It requires those in attendance to listen to the material with an open mind and open heart and in good faith with a desire to learn about ACA recovery and emotional sobriety.

Our objective is simple: to introduce members to the ACA program and introduce the ACA 12 Steps by bringing clarity and awareness to the realization that the ACA 12 Steps offer opportunities for solutions.

Each step will contain a worksheet that may bring more clarity and understanding of each Step. We will set aside a few minutes to fill in the worksheets and to answer any questions. The Appendix will provide a complete version of the worksheets for extra copies. There is no right or wrong way to do the worksheets. They can be done over time as we grow.

Choosing a sharing partner from this group is suggested for support for the four weeks. Sharing the worksheets with a sharing partner or sponsor or fellow traveler is recommended. This experience with a sharing partner can give the adult child insight to choosing a sponsor.

Sponsors may be inclined to introduce Ready Set GO!! to their sponsees to begin their work together in ACA perhaps setting a flexible time frame to accommodate their needs.

In each of the four weeks we encourage you to prepare for these meetings by reading the Laundry List Traits, ACA 12 Steps, ACA 12 Traditions, ACA Solution, and the ACA 12 Promises at the beginning of the book before attending each Ready Set GO!! Meeting.

As we begin, we remind ourselves to have an open mind and an open heart. Be gentle with yourself as you go through this experience of Ready Set GO!!. This brief encounter may prepare you for when you are **Ready**, and you feel **Set** to **GO!!** forward. Remember Ready Set GO!! is an introduction of ACA.

Be in peace and let fear and anxiety leave you for this journey.

How to Use This Book

- Purchase the Ready Set GO!! Introductory ACA 12 Steps Starter Guide.
- This book is an introductory steps starter guide to the ACA 12 Steps and the ACA program for newcomers and for the experienced members who may want to refresh their program.
- There are 3 parts to this book.
- The 4 dividers contain affirmations to be used to nurture and affirm your inner child.
 - Part 1 will be used to give you a clearer understanding of Ready Set GO!!
 - The Laundry List, The Problem, The Solution and The Promises should be read by participants prior to the RSG weekly meetings.
 - Ready Set GO!! shares are included for inspiration and encouragement.
 - Part 2 is used to guide us through the 4 introductory Ready Set GO!! face to face meetings, or 4 RSG Telephone Meetings, or a RSG One Day Workshop, suggestions are in the Appendices D and E. Although not listed RSG would be ideal for a 2 or 3 day retreat.
 - It contains a user friendly, structured and detailed format with the script inserted for the leader and the participant to share the readings.
 - The suggested schedule for the 4 hour and a half introductory meetings are:
Week #1 - The Introduction, and Steps 1, 2 and 3, Week #2 - Steps 4 and 5, Week #3 - Steps 6, 7, 8 and 9, and Week #4 - Steps 10, 11 and 12.
 - Information about a sharing partner is explained in the format.
 - Each step is followed by a worksheet and during the meeting a few minutes are allotted to fill in the worksheets. Worksheets may be shared during sharing time if you are comfortable. 4th Step Inventories may be preferred to be done privately.
 - Two small group sharing times and question and answer time will be offered.
 - Introducing a new Closing Prayer “Gathered Together”.
 - Part 3 will be used for Ready Set GO!!’s Appendices.
 - Definitions
 - Blank Worksheets to make copies as needed.
 - Closing Prayer - “Gathered Together”
 - **Suggestions for Ready Set GO!! Telephone Introductory Closed Meetings**
 - **Suggestions for Ready Set GO!! One Day Workshop**
 - Suggested Workbook Group Format
 - Tony A’s 12 Steps/info (Steps Pending)
 - Continuing Your Journey Toward Recovery After Ready Set GO!!
 - In Gratitude of Ready Set GO!!
 - Ready Set GO!! Acknowledgments
 - Blank Pages for Notes
 - Back Cover (explanation of Ready Set Go!!’s cover)
 - Ready Set GO!! Endnotes

How Ready Set GO!! Came To Be

- In 2010 ACA members went to a program called Back to Basics from AA for OA. The thought came to a few members that could be developed for ACA.
- The concept to create a similar program for ACA using our Big Red Book was brought to the Chicagoland Area Intergroup and was approved.
- Trusted servants created an outline used to develop a script of the ACA 12 Steps.
- It was tested by the RSG Committee of Downers Grove, IL and La Grange, IL with a four week meeting format.
- In 2013 it was brought to Denmark at the WSO/ABC and suggested it be tested for another year.
- West Great Lakes ACA Intergroup began sponsoring RSG by funding the printing of the scripts for participants.
- It was officially presented to WSO in August 2014. WSO Literature Committee agreed to put RSG on their website for the fellowship to review early 2015 thus beginning the process for consideration for publication as an ACA Conference Approved Literature.
- The first Traveling RSG was started October 2014 in Lake Barrington, IL. A fellow traveler from Fitchburg, WI asked to do RSG meetings in his area. He then developed RSG One Day Workshop using the same material of the original RSG.
- The RSG meetings continued to be held in La Grange with WGLIG's as our sponsor.
- In 2016 through 2017 we had a face to face RSG meeting combined with teleconference opportunity.
- In October 2016, WSO Literature Evaluation Subcommittee returned the material with recommendations for revising purposes to enhance the project.
- In November 2016 and continuing into 2017 RSG was established as a registered telephone meetings.
- Through the assistance of the WSO Literature Evaluation Subcommittee, and the RSG Committee, the script itself stayed the same but other features were added to achieve the recommendations of WSO Literature Committee.
- February 2018, further testing to smooth out the expanded version were helpful in completing the present version of Ready Set GO!!
- Teleconference with WSO Literature Committee proposing RSG goes to this years ABC to become Conference Approved Literature leaving us very excited.
- April 26, 2018, RSG presented to ABC in Toronto, Canada to be ACA Conference Approved Literature.
- April 27, 2018, RSG approved to be ACA Conference Approved Literature.
- Final field testing, and preliminary edits for face to face 4 week RSG completed June 28, 2018.
- Draft sent to the ACA WSO Literature Committee June 28, 2018.

Ready Set GO!! Committee

How Does Ready Set GO!! Work?

From the very start I am asked to make a decision, a choice whether or not to go to a meeting that is called Ready Set GO!!.

“I am confused, depressed, scared, angry, anxious, in denial, and fearful and now I am asked to make a decision, a choice?”

I’m told that I will be going through an introduction of the ACA 12 Steps in four weeks.

”Wow!??” “That seems impossible!” “That ain’t going to work for me!” “That sounds overwhelming to me!” “That is too scary for me!” “I want to run away!”

How do I get **READY** for that?

Trust, take a risk, find courage, be honest, be open minded, stop isolating

What will I need to do to **SET** myself up for that?

Trust, take a risk, find courage, be honest, be open minded, stop isolating

What will happen to me when I **GO!!?**

I will begin my ACA Recovery!!

How Does Ready Set GO!! Work? We gather together at a meeting and read together to share the words of Adult Children from our Big Red Book and our ACA 12 Step Workbook. We have some sharing time to use our voice maybe for the first time in our life.

Ready Set GO!! Introductory Meetings are a safe place to seek and learn about ACA without stress and tension. Our Ready Set GO!! Introductory Meetings help us feel comfortable while dealing with difficult issues that may come up while looking into this process of our recovery.

The Adult Child is encouraged to continue to attend regular ACA meetings while doing Ready Set GO!!. The Adult Child is encouraged to do Ready Set GO!! many times to benefit from all the material that is offered about the ACA 12 Steps and the ACA program. The ACA 12 Steps are our Solution to overcoming the Laundry List Traits. The ACA program will lead us to emotional sobriety. This is a life long process that will heal us and help us grow into the person our Higher Power created us to be.

The decision, the choice we make to go to a Ready Set GO!! Introductory Meetings is totally up to each Adult Child. Ready Set GO!! is not magic, and recovery doesn’t happen overnight, in a week or a month or a year, it is a lifelong experience. It works if we work it and we are worth it!

Ready Set GO!!

Suggested Preparations For Members

- Read The Laundry List, The Problem, The 12 Steps, The 12 Traditions, The Solution and The Promises on your own the day of your Ready Set GO!! meeting.
- Volunteer to be a sharing partner when you feel comfortable for four weeks.
- Ask a sharing partner to support you through the four weeks.
- Volunteer to be the leader for one week of Ready Set GO!!
- Continue to attend your regular meetings.
- Put your mind at ease and understand that RSG is available to be taken as many times as needed. It is a stepping stone to go on to the ACA 12 Step Workbook when you are ready to choose to move onto that.
- Have faith in the process and know that the Steps offer a solution.
- Feel free to ask questions. This is your recovery and questions help us understand and gives us clarity.
- Print out full worksheets that are in Appendix B as needed.
- A few regular ACA meetings would be helpful before attending Ready Set GO!! Introductory Meetings.

It is time for me to focus on my ACA Recovery!

Suggested Guidelines For Leaders

- Pray for guidance to lead a RSG meeting. Some experience leading a meeting will help.
- Volunteer to be the leader for one week of Ready Set GO!!
- Follow Part Two which contains the primary script of Ready Set GO!! inserted into a user friendly format. This is designed to cover the four weeks of a face to face meeting.
- **Part Two may be followed for telephone meetings with the details that are in Appendix D.**
- **Part Two may be followed for the RSG One Day Workshop details in Appendix E.**
- **Part Two may also be useful for a 2 or 3 day retreat with minor adjustments.**
- Sponsors may find RSG helpful to be used with sponsees at a slower pace.
- Pick a location for your meeting.
- Pick a date and time for the meeting.
- Register the meeting with WSO.
- Create a sign-up sheet.
- Make announcements at meetings.
- Print out full worksheets that are in Appendix B as needed.
- Create a flyer for the meeting.
- Contact your local Intergroup and WSO to post the flyer on their website for other members to participate from surrounding areas.
- Perhaps offer RSG meetings once or twice a year in place of your regular meeting.



SEEKING HELPFUL GOALS

READY = I will become **READY** to take on the ACA 12 Steps.

SET = I will become **SET** into a new way of living my life.

GO!! = I will become willing to **GO!!** to any length for my recovery.

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Ready Set GO!! Shares

Share #1

How Ready Set GO!! has Worked in my Recovery in ACA

RSG has given me an opportunity to give back to ACA what I have been so freely given.

RSG has given me a new understanding of the power of the steps.

RSG has helped me overcome my fears and anxieties to share my experience, strength and hope with others who are still suffering and who deserve the better things life has to offer.

RSG has given me the capacity to know I now have a voice and I am heard when I speak.

RSG has given me the peace and serenity I need to nourish myself with love, kindness and tenderness.

RSG has given me a chance to grow and heal.

RSG instilled in me a desire to ask my Higher Power to help me every step of the way.

RSG has given me courage and willingness to go to any length to share RSG with those who want it.

RSG has given me clarity and awareness of the ACA program.

RSG has given me gratitude and an understanding that all of these gifts were always there, all I had to do was keep coming back.

RSG has humbled me, I am equal with all my ACA friends, I've never felt that in my family.

RSG has given me the security that I am stable and sane.

RSG has given me the ability to stand up for myself and believe I am worthy of good things coming my way.

RSG has paved the way for me to be happy, joyous and free.

RSG extended my love for ACA beyond what I thought was never going to be possible, that is being a sponsor.

RSG has helped me realize that even though my inner child was abused, wounded and confused and rageful she survived and all her pain and suffering has been replaced with loving kindness from her Loving Parent and that is me.

I am not sure, nor could I promise that by letting Ready Set GO!! in to your recovery that anyone will experience what I have experienced in RSG. Releasing the fears and anxieties need a trusting, open heart to find out if this will work for them. The Adult Child, the Inner Child are worthy of the experience.

Be In Peace,

Toni P.

Share #2

The first time I took READY, SET, GO!!, it was in the beginning stages of my recovery, about eight years ago. I was very new to ACA at the time, and didn't quite get it. As READY, SET, GO!! grew so did my understanding. My understanding grew not only about ACA and the 12 steps, but more importantly about myself. It introduced me to the feelings of loss and pain I had not ever felt. It taught me that I could trust the people in my READY, SET, GO!! meeting and maybe could trust other people. It taught me that I was incredibly lost, when I had never known I was lost. It also showed me there was a way to find myself--through the 12 steps.

I have now facilitated several READY, SET, GO!! meetings. This has been almost more valuable than being a participant. Through the participants, I experience their willingness to begin the journey to healing. I see the courage and strength to put aside denial and find their truth. Through this I have learned to look ever deeper in myself to continue finding my truth.

READY, SET, GO!! has helped me as a participant, giving me courage and strength to continue on a long road that lies ahead. I know I am not alone as I travel. Others have shared their journey with me. As a facilitator, I witness the discovery of the 12 steps through newcomers and the resolve in the "old timers". Could I ask for anything more?

Kathy S.

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Share #3

Ready Set GO!! Share

Ready Set GO!!(RSG) is an introduction to all Twelve Steps in just four weeks/sessions. As an adult child of an alcoholic, I came to Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA) very afraid and anxious. RSG spelled out all of the steps in a simple way, using material from the Big Red Book(BRB). RSG and it's overview of working the steps was the introduction I needed to begin my recovery. I recommend RSG to all newcomers and any members looking to renew their commitment to the twelve steps and working the program.

By: Bridget F.

9/9/2017

Share #4

A Solid Foundation to Stand On

As a newcomer, I felt somewhat intimidated by the ACA program as I wasn't sure where to start and how to approach my recovery the "right" way. I identified with the adult child description and the Laundry List and I knew this was the place for spiritual healing. After attending my first few ACA meetings, I began to trust the Promises would materialize if I worked for them, but the "how" of getting there felt overwhelming.

Fortunately, I had the opportunity to participate in a four-week Ready, Set GO!! Program that introduced me to the 12 Steps and helped me build a solid foundation for working the program. I was able to gain insights for each of the Steps and how they apply to my recovery. I also began to explore how my childhood experiences shaped the way I coped with life's challenges; and that I did the best I could with what I had. I felt empowered to use the tools offered through ACA and I trusted they would eventually help me find my True Self and a new way to live.

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of my participation in Ready Set GO!! was having an outlet to share my experience with others who were new to ACA. While I felt safe and supported in ACA meetings, there was an added element of "you are not alone in this" with others who were eager to discover the Steps and prepare to work the program. I gained an appreciation for how much courage it takes to move out of isolation, work through the pain of the past and break out of old thought and behavior patterns. The insights, love and support I received through Ready Set GO!! helped me get grounded in what ACA has to offer and fueled my determination to embark on my journey toward healing.

Kate B.

The Laundry List Traits

- 1 We became isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.
- 2 We became approval seekers and lost our identity in the process.
- 3 We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.
- 4 We either become alcoholics, marry them or both, or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfill our sick abandonment needs.
- 5 We live life from the viewpoint of victims and we are attracted by that weakness in our love and friendship relationships.
- 6 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.
- 7 We get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.
- 8 We became addicted to excitement.
- 9 We confuse love and pity and tend to "love" people we can "pity" and "rescue."
- 10 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).
- 11 We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem.
- 12 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.
- 13 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.
- 14 Para-alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.

Tony A., 1978

The Problem

Many of us found that we had several characteristics in common as a result of being brought up in an alcoholic or dysfunction 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 practiced other addictive behavior ourselves, or married them, or both. Failing that, we found other compulsive personalities, such as a workaholic, to fulfill our sick need for abandonment.

We lived life from the standpoint of victims. Having an overdeveloped sense of responsibilities, we preferred to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. We got guilt feelings when we stood up for ourselves rather than giving into others. Thus, 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. Yet 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 kept them buried as adults. As a result of this conditioning, we 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 relationships. This is a description, not an indictment.

The ACA 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, humor, 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 ACA 12 Steps

- 1 We admitted we were powerless over the effects of alcoholism or other family dysfunction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2 Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God.
- 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7 Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
- 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10 Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
- 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12 Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The 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 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-Step 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 to 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, films, and other public media.
- 12 Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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 behaviors.
12. Gradually, with our Higher Power's help, we will learn to expect the best and get it.

Twelve Steps of Adult Children



Steps Workbook

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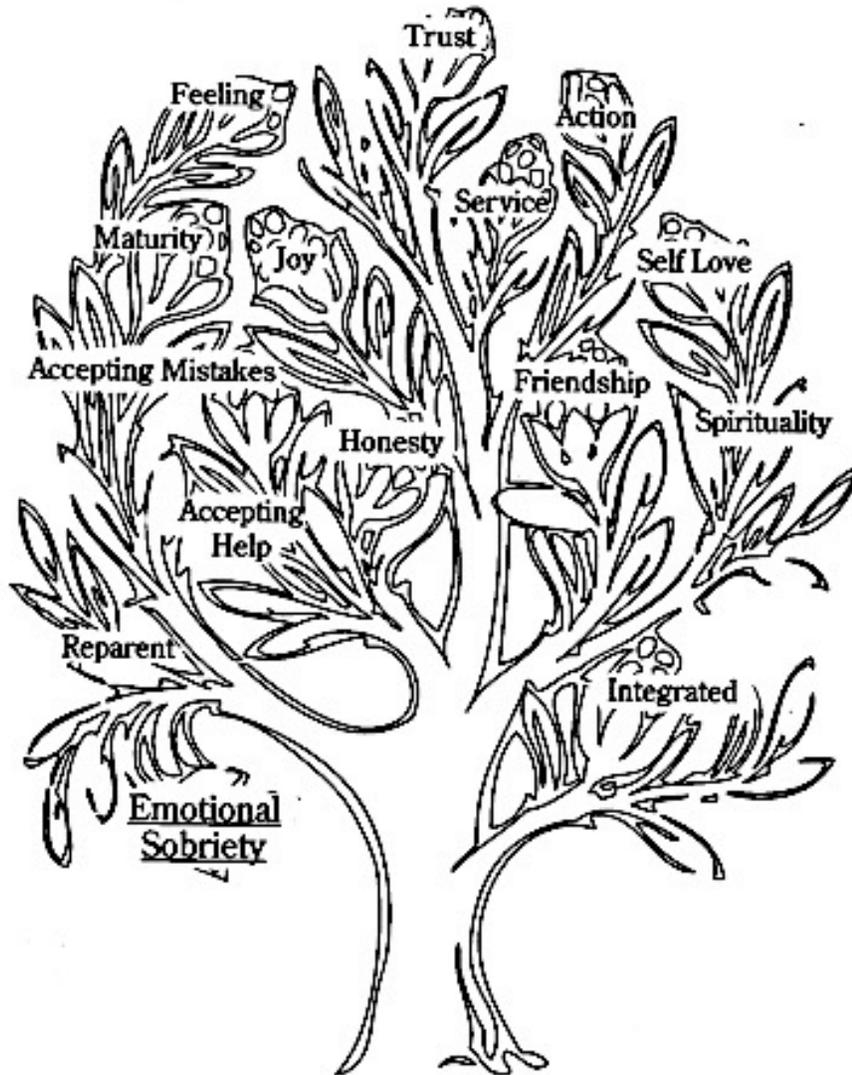
The front cover of the ACA Workbook depicts the Laundry List Tree, which represents the traits of an adult child. The tree also shows the distinction between the traits which are learned in childhood and the defects of character that develop later in life. The Laundry Lists Traits represents the limbs while the character defects are the fruit.

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THE ACA RECOVERY TREE



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World Service Organization, Inc.
PO Box 3216
Torrance, CA 90510
<http://www.adultchildren.org>

The back cover of the ACA 12 Steps Workbook depicts the Recovery Tree and the possible results to be realized by working through the ACA Twelve Steps. With recovery, we integrate many of the Laundry List Traits while removing many of the defects of character.

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Part 2

The Script



ACA Twelve Steps Stages

BRB p.280

Steps One through Three as **“Giving Up”**

Steps Four and Five as **“Fessing Up”**

Steps Six through Nine as **“Cleaning Up”**

Steps Ten through Twelve as **“Stepping Up”**

Inner Child Affirmations

BRB p. 329-330

It is okay to feel angry.

It is okay to have fun and celebrate.

It is okay to make mistakes and learn.

It is okay to not know everything.

It is okay to say “I don’t know.”

It is okay to ask someone to show me how to do things.

It is okay to dream and have hope.

It is okay to think about things differently than my family.

It is okay to explore and say, “I like this or I like that.”

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Ready Set GO!! Week #1

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The host will be the leader for week one of Ready Set GO!!?

- Hi, my name is _____, I am an adult child.
- Welcome to week one of a Ready Set GO!! Introductory Meeting offering an introduction of the ACA Program and the introduction of Steps 1, 2, and 3.
- Will all who care to please join me in the Serenity Prayer?
- God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.
- Let's go around and introduce ourselves. I'll go first.
 - Ready Set GO!! are closed ACA introductory meetings. We meet to introduce our ACA 12 Steps and ACA program in a structured four week time frame. We recognize all our 12 Traditions for safety within the group.
 - Ready Set GO!! is an introduction for ACA newcomers to become acquainted with the ACA Twelve Steps and get clarity and an understanding of the ACA Program. Ready Set GO!! introduces the experienced member to a renewal of their commitment to working their program through the ACA 12 Steps. Ready Set GO!! prepares members for when they will feel ready to go to the ACA 12 Step Workbook. Feel free to leave your fears and anxieties behind you as you experience these introductory meetings.
- The material is taken from our Big Red Book, the ACA 12 Step Workbook, and Strengthening My Recovery, the ACA meditation book. It requires those in attendance to listen to the material with an open mind and an open heart and in good faith with a desire to learn about ACA recovery and emotional sobriety.
- Our objective is simple: to introduce members to the ACA program and introduce the ACA 12 Steps by bringing clarity and awareness to the realization that the ACA 12 Steps offer opportunities for solutions.

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- Each step will contain a worksheet that may bring more clarity and understanding of each Step. We will set aside a few minutes to fill in the worksheets and to answer any questions. Appendix B will provide a complete version of the worksheets for copies as needed.
- There is no right or wrong way to do the worksheets. They can be done over time as we grow.
- Choosing a sharing partner from this group is suggested for support for the four weeks. Sharing the worksheets with a sharing partner, sponsor, fellow traveler, or your group is recommended, when you feel comfortable. This experience with a sharing partner can give the adult child insight to choosing a sponsor.
- Sponsors may be inclined to introduce Ready Set GO!! to their sponsees to begin their work together in ACA perhaps setting a flexible time frame to accommodate their needs.
- In each of the four weeks we encourage you to prepare for these meetings by reading The Laundry List Traits, The Problem, The Solution, ACA 12 Steps, ACA 12 Traditions, and The Promises in Part One before attending each Ready Set GO!! Introductory meeting.
- As we begin, we remind ourselves to have an open mind and an open heart. Be gentle with yourself as you go through this experience of Ready Set GO!!. This brief encounter with the 12 Steps may prepare you to do the ACA 12 Steps Workbook when you choose to do it. Remember Ready Set GO!! is an introduction to ACA.
- Be in peace and let fear and anxiety leave you for this journey.
- I will read from Strengthening My Recovery related to the Introduction: "On this day I will remember that what I learn through ACA and the Steps is not just for me. My program can affect everyone whose life I touch."
- We will begin with an Introduction to the ACA program. The introduction of Steps 1, 2, and 3 will give us a start to build the foundation ACA offers us as a spiritual program.
- Please do not rush through the readings so we can fully absorb the material.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading the Introduction?

INTRODUCTION

The Six Suggestions for Ongoing Recovery

• While ACA members avoid giving advice, we can share our recovery experience. These six suggestions of ACA recovery represent the basics whether we are a newcomer or a member with years in the program. These suggestions work in the first year of recovery or the 20th year. We find them helpful in getting the newcomer to focus on him or herself.

1. Stop acting out on food, sex, relationships, gambling, spending, or alcohol/drugs.
2. Go to meetings regularly and break the "don't talk rule".
3. Get a sponsor and work the Twelve Steps.
4. Get the ACA "Big Red Book". Give yourself a break and read it.
5. Get telephone numbers. Don't isolate.
6. Get a Higher Power.¹

• ACA is an independent Twelve Step program founded on the principles of the Twelve Steps and The Twelve Traditions. Additionally, ACA focuses on nurturing the Loving Parent within and seeking a Higher Power. In ACA, we believe connecting with our feelings and Inner Child are just as important as working the Twelve Steps and sponsorship. We confront our Inner Critical Parent and allow our Loving Parent to emerge. With our Loving Parent guiding us, we remove ourselves from codependent relationships and stop harming ourselves. We seek help for our addictions if we are acting out with drugs, sex, food, spending, gambling, or another compulsive behavior. We learn that we can recover from trauma and neglect.

Welcome to ACA and the journey.²

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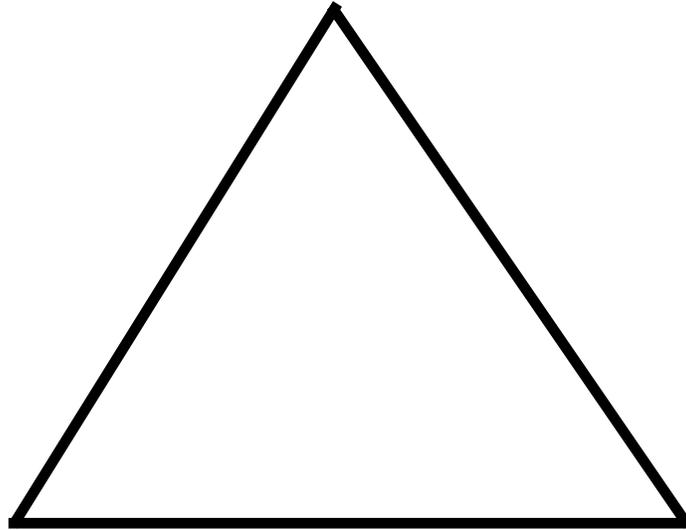
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ACA Disease Model

Adult Child
PTSD
Stored Trauma
Neglect

BODY



MIND

14 Traits
Laundry Traits

SPIRIT

Hidden
Inner Child

This model represents the disease of family dysfunction. The model is a description of our condition and personality. As children, we were affected in body, mind and spirit by alcoholism or other family dysfunction. Our bodies stored the trauma, neglect, and rejection in the form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The mind developed the Laundry List Traits or the false self to survive. The Inner child, the true connection to our Higher Power, went into hiding. ACA recovery can reverse this process.

Prediction factor:

*If you have any two of the three elements of the model,
you have the other.*

Example: Trauma/Neglect + 14 Traits = Hidden Inner Child.³

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• Step Study Meeting

The focus of this meeting is recovery, through the study, application, and practice of the Twelve Steps of ACA. As children, we developed behaviors to survive our dysfunctional family. We carried these behaviors, attitudes, and feelings with us into adulthood. They are the source of our pain, unhappiness, and isolation. If we wish to change our lives, we must learn a new way of life. The Twelve Steps are the tools that teach us how to live with a greater awareness. Through a process of awareness, acceptance, and action, we will begin to recover from the effects of family dysfunction.⁴

• A Feeling and an Unfeeling Self

To protect ourselves from the disorienting effects of living with confusion and pain, we divide into a feeling and unfeeling self and isolate ourselves from our own vulnerability. We alternate between the extremes of wanting to escape our isolation and the need to stay securely hidden in our familiar prison of pain. Our beliefs and behaviors become rigid and inflexible, and we swing from the depths of isolated depression to frantic attempts to find help in the outside world. We endlessly repeat the cycle of frustration, rage, and despair, but the goal of the divided self remains the same as it was in childhood: to become whole once again and to find happiness, peace, and joy.⁵

The Twelve Steps are simple but not always easy; however, they work if a person truly wants to change and can hang on while change occurs.⁶

• Characteristics

We find that a difference in identity and purpose distinguishes Adult Children of Alcoholics from other 12 Step Programs and underscores the need for our special focus.

The central problem for ACAs is a mistaken belief, formed in childhood, which affects every part of our lives. As children, we fought to survive the destructive effects of alcoholism and began an endless struggle to change a troubled, dysfunctional family into a loving, supportive one. We reach adulthood believing we failed, unable to see no one can stop the traumatic effect of family alcoholism.⁷

Following naturally from this pervasive sense of failure are self-blame, shame, and guilt. These self-accusations ultimately lead to self-hate. Accepting our basic powerlessness to control alcoholic behavior and its effect on the family is the key that unlocks the inner child and lets reparenting begin. When the "First Step" is applied to family alcoholism, a fundamental basis for self-hate no longer exists.⁸

• The ACA Program

Two characteristics identify the ACA Program. The program is for adults raised in alcoholic homes, and although substance abuse may exist, the focus is on the self, specifically on reaching and freeing the inner child hidden behind a protective shield of denial. The purpose of ACA is three-fold: to shelter and support "newcomers" in confronting "denial"; to comfort those mourning their early loss of security, trust, and love; and to teach the skills for reparenting ourselves with gentleness, humor, love, and respect.⁹

By adapting AA's Steps, ACA is adding its flavor to the Steps while keeping intact the original intent of an admission of powerlessness followed by surrender. Such surrender is followed by a review of spiritual beliefs, self-inventory, making amends, and seeking conscious contact with a Higher Power. We develop a genuine attitude to live in love and service to ourselves and others.¹⁰

The ACA adapted Steps are designed specifically to help the adult child. They are designed to address trauma and neglect in addition to addressing the addictiveness of the adult child personality. The ACA Twelve Steps address shame, abandonment, fear, and a deep sense of being flawed, while also leading the Step worker to self-worth, self-forgiveness, and a true connection to a Higher Power through the Inner Child.¹¹

In **Steps One through Three**, we will become aware that we are powerless over the effects of the disease of family dysfunction--that our lives are unmanageable. We will come to an acceptance of the fact that only a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. We make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care and guidance of a God of our understanding. We see this God as a loving parent who cares for us.

In **Steps Four and Five** we will continue the process of self-discovery and self-awareness by making a written inventory of attitudes and behaviors. We

also see the generational nature of this behavior and how it was transmitted to us by our dysfunctional parents or relatives. With ACA, we learn to forgive ourselves and our parents. We change our behavior. In **Step Five** we tell our story with clarity and humility to our sponsor. We will learn to trust ourselves and break down the walls of isolation we have hidden behind.¹²

In **Steps Six and Seven** we will become willing to have God remove our defects of character. We also learn to integrate our Laundry List survival traits. We transform them into spiritual assets when possible.¹³

In **Steps Eight and Nine** we will become willing to make amends for our inappropriate behaviors. We take responsibility for our actions and feelings. We also learn to be gentle with ourselves and to protect our Inner Child during this process. We balance taking responsibility for our inappropriate behavior with being aware that we also are protecting a wounded child within. We do not balk at making difficult amends, but we lovingly reparent ourselves during this process as well.¹⁴

In **Steps Ten through Twelve**, having now begun the process of recovery, we will learn how to make the Steps a part of our daily lives. We will continue to take personal inventory, learning more about ourselves as we grow. We will seek to improve our contact with our Higher Power through prayer and meditation. We seek to learn God's will for us, and we ask for the power to carry that out. Finally, **Step Twelve**, having experienced a spiritual awakening, we learn to practice these principles in all our affairs and to carry the message to those who still suffer. If we wish to keep what we have gained, we must learn to give it away, where and whenever we can. We must get out of ourselves. We insist on enjoying life and being a part of life.¹⁵

Family Types That Can Create Adult Children¹⁶



In the above graphic, we are including the alcoholic family to show how all the families touch the center point of shame and abandonment. This is the commonality of the families.

The five family types that can produce adult children even though alcoholism is not always present are:

- Homes with mental illness in the parent(s).
- Homes with hypochondriac parent(s).
- Homes with ritualistic beliefs, harsh punishment, and extreme secretiveness, often with ultra-religious, militaryistic, or sadistic overtones. Some of these homes expose children to battery and other forms of criminal abuse.
- Homes with covert or actual sexual abuse, including incest and inappropriate touching or dress by the parent(s).
- Perfectionistic, shaming homes in which expectations are often too high and praise is typically tied to an accomplishment rather than given freely.

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- Are there any questions about what we just read?
 - We will now have our 15 minutes of sharing time with 3 minute shares.
 - We will break up into small groups. Count off as needed. (if needed)
 - I will let you know when the 15 mins is over.
 - Shares need to be kept to 3 minutes, please be considerate of others.
 - Please share on what we just read or what is on your heart. If you feel comfortable you may share your worksheet(s).
 - Please be considerate and give everyone time to share.
 - We do not cross talk. Crosstalk means interrupting, referring to, commenting on, or using the content of what another person has said during the meeting.
 - Just a reminder what is said at this meeting stays at this meeting.
 - Please be respectful of our confidentiality.
- — — Upon return of small groups — — —
- Welcome back. We will go on to Step One.
 - In Step One we will become aware that we are powerless over the effects of the disease of family dysfunction--that our lives are unmanageable.
 - I will read from Strengthening My Recovery which is related to Step 1: "On this day I see wonderful things happening in my life as I loosen my grip. . . and let go."
 - Please do not rush through the readings so that we can absorb the material.
 - We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 1?

The ACA Twelve Steps

- **Step One**

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

- ***Spiritual Principles: Powerlessness and Surrender***

Denial, which fosters a lack of clarity, is the glue that allows the disease of family dysfunction to thrive. Cloaked in denial, the disease is passed on to the next generation with amazing consistency. The basic language of denial is: "don't talk, don't trust, don't feel".¹⁷

With Step One we come out of denial and talk about what happened. We bring details to light.¹⁸

Our siblings may have remembered things differently, but we know our own truth. We know what happened and we are breaking our silence.¹⁹

Families without alcoholism have similar situations. These families abuse the children through the use of intellect, manipulation, or silence. We know our truth.²⁰

The roles which are usually present in alcoholic and dysfunctional homes include "family hero, lost child, scapegoat, and mascot."²¹

Many adult children realize they have absorbed generational shame, abandonment, and rage only to grow up and recreate similar families or relationships.²²

We grew up with the same loss, shame, and self-hate as other adult children. Like others, we turned to control in adulthood for a sense of safety.²³

We cannot change anyone. The only person we can change is ourselves, and an adult child rarely changes unless he or she becomes willing to learn a new way to live. The good news is this: There is another way to live.²⁴

Powerlessness in ACA can mean that we were not responsible for our parents' dysfunctional behavior as children or adults. It means that as adults we are not responsible for going back and "fixing" the family unit. We are not responsible for rescuing, saving, or healing our parents or siblings who remain mired in family dysfunction. We can detach with love and begin the gradual process of learning about boundaries. We live and let live.²⁵

By admitting our powerlessness, we take our first step toward reclaiming personal power, which is critical for healing our fractured identities. If we are compulsively self-reliant, we take our first step toward trust and asking for help.²⁶

Like powerlessness, the concept of unmanageability in Step One is often misunderstood by adult children. While some of our families were chaotic and unstable when we were children, many homes seemed manageable and productive. But we learned that productivity does not always equal a manageable, wholesome life. For many of us, what we thought was manageable or desirable in our dysfunctional homes was actually oppressive control.²⁷

The unmanageability that we speak of in Step One involves our desire to control others and ourselves while having a sense that we are not capable or effective. While we have moments of control, we usually experience painful episodes of losing control. We feel hurt when confronted by our loved ones for our controlling behavior. They act out in anger or abandonment to disrupt our attempts to control them. We may be momentarily hurt, but we usually blame others for this abandonment. We blame them for not reading our minds or not acting in a manner that we would approve. We run about attempting to control others and situations in an effort to avoid our own unmanageable lives. Control is an attempt to minimize uncertainty and to avoid our own uncomfortable feelings about the past and present. Yet, our unmanageability, fueled by our fear-based control, inevitably creates what we fear the most: abandonment.²⁸

ACA recovery begins when the adult child gives up, asks for help, and then accepts the help offered. Some adult children call giving up "hitting a bottom".²⁹

Surrender means we become willing to do whatever it takes to recover and find peace and serenity in our lives. We admit complete defeat and give up notions that we can "fix" or control someone else. We become willing to attend meetings, work the Twelve Steps, and break through the denial of family dysfunctions.³⁰

With feelings, respect, trust, and honesty we no longer confuse love and pity.³¹

FAMILY MEMBER LABELS WORKSHEET

Think about your experiences or what you have heard about relatives in connection with addiction, religion, relationship, food, sex, work, etc.³²
The labels for your family members can include one or a combination of labels.³³

AS I READ CHECK THOSE THAT APPLY TO ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY

Alcoholic
Used alcohol/drugs
Worked a lot (workaholic)
Religious
Worried a lot (neurotic)
Perfectionist (high strung)
Enabler
Chronically ill, hypochondriac
Emotionally ill
People-pleaser
Martyr
Obese sibling/relative
Sickly child, too sensitive
Loner
Thief, bogus check writer, inmate
Sexually aggressive, not safe
Grabbed or wrestled inappropriately
Pill popper (always taking something)
Ladies man, player, gigolo, skirt chaser
Harsh, always critical, verbally abusive
Great cook (always thought of herself last)
Undependable, does not follow through
Argumentative (will not be quiet, keeps arguments going)
Violent, slapped other, pinched, threatened, glorified fighting
Always had her face in a mirror (thought she was better than others)
Heavy debt (always borrowing money) or big spender (flashy clothes)

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In ACA, we seek "emotional sobriety" by making a commitment to love ourselves and be good to ourselves. We stop harming ourselves by attaining ACA emotional sobriety.³⁴

We are removing layers of shame and despair to find our True Selves. We began peeling back layers of the onion in Step One with the admission of being powerless over the effects of family dysfunction. Just as an onion can b ring tears, our grief work will help us find our tears.³⁵

Moreover, the disease is generational, which means the traits and thoughts you have at this moment have been passed down from generations hence. Relief from the disease occurs when we do Step work, attend Twelve Step meetings, and seek a Higher Power's guidance. By admitting we are powerless over the effects of family dysfunction and that our lives have become unmanageable, we are ready to move onto Step Two.³⁶

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- The next page has the Step 1 Worksheet - Powerlessness, Unmanageability, Surrender Process.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.
- I will read the following worksheet.
- You will have 3 minutes to fill it in to the best of your ability.
- Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner for support if needed.

Step 1 Worksheet

Powerlessness, Unmanageability, Surrender Process

Effects of Powerlessness <i>Examples: denial, shame, hopeless, lost, stuck, frustrated, confused, worthless</i>	Situations of Unmanageability <i>Examples: relationships, parenting, working, money, organizing</i>	Gain Surrender By <i>Examples: Willing to attend ACA meetings, study ACA 12 steps, get a sponsor, consider a therapist</i>

Leader

Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step One.

- We will go on to Step Two.
- We will come to an acceptance of the fact that only a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity.
- I will read from Strengthening My Recovery which relates to Step 2: "On this day I will have faith in a power greater than myself. I will give myself permission to explore what that is for me, no matter what it looks like for others."
- Please do not rush through the readings so that we can absorb the material.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 2?

Participant

- **Step Two**
- **Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**
- **Spiritual Principles: Open-mindedness and Clarity**

Moving to Steps Two and Three, many adult children are confronted with the issues of faith and a Higher Power. In our anger at our parents and God, many of us thought we had outgrown or moved past this issue in our lives. Frankly, some of us did not like this part of the ACA program. Being told of the spiritual nature of ACA irritated some of us. We wondered about the need for spirituality in recovery. We must remember that ACA is a spiritual and not a religious program. Faith and religious conviction are not requirements for ACA membership. We avoid dogmatism and theological discussions, yet, a Higher Power is a key part of the ACA way of life.³⁷

Many adult children have assigned the traits of their dysfunctional parents to God or a Higher Power. If their parents were shaming, vengeful, and inconsistent, then their God tends to be the same. Some adult children describe having a "getcha God". For them, God keeps a record of their behavior and punishes them or "gets them" for making mistakes.³⁸

It has been said that "insanity is repeating the same mistake and expecting a different result." That has been our experience. Change does not occur until the adult child does the Step work needed to curb the tendency to reach outside ourselves for love and affirmation. One of the keys to being restored to sanity involves surrendering our need to harm ourselves or to run from our feelings. We must also be honest about our actions and motives. We must name our behavior properly to avoid the delusional thinking that we are "feeling fine" when in reality we are headed for trouble. Such honesty or clarity of thought comes from seeking a Higher Power and by attending ACA meetings. We stop reacting and become actors, choosing a nurturing role in our Higher Power's play rather than a nightmare role in a destructive or unloving relationship.³⁹

One purpose of Step Two is to introduce the idea of keeping an open mind on the possibility of a Higher Power who can restore sanity. In some cases, our Higher Power helps us create sanity or wholeness for the first time in our lives.⁴⁰

ACA is a spiritual program that confronts the effects of the disease of dysfunction head on. The disease affects our bodies, minds, and spirits and

requires a spiritual solution for lasting impact. Knowing where our perceptions of a Higher Power originated from and if the perceptions are accurate, is critical. We must discern what we believe or do not believe if we are to work Step Two and the remainder of the Steps.⁴¹

In one respect, Step Two implies that we had sanity and lost it when in reality we may be learning about sanity for the first time in ACA. A helpful tip in working Step Two involves replacing the word "sanity" with "clarity".⁴²

When we settle down and listen, we begin to realize that the Power that brought us to ACA is still with us today. Where we once thought we found ACA by mistake, we begin to realize that a benevolent Power has been guiding us all along. Discovering this Power is one of the great miracles that many adult children have experienced in working Step Two and the remaining Steps. For some the Higher Power is recognized simply as loving and nurturing. The Higher Power is patient as it seeks to help the adult child find wholeness and integration of a divided self.⁴³

- Following is the Step 2 Worksheet - Seeking A Higher Power.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.
- I will read the following worksheet.
- You will have 3 minutes to fill it in to the best of your ability.
- Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner for support if needed.

Step 2 Worksheet

Seeking A Higher Power

Childhood Beliefs of a Higher Power	Adult Beliefs of a Higher Power	Ways to Seek a Higher Power

L e a d e r	<i>Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Two.</i>
	• We will go on to Step Three.
	• In Step Three we make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care and guidance of a God of our understanding. We see this God as a loving parent who cares for us.
	• I will read from Strengthening My Recovery related to Step 3: "On this day I will accept the challenges that are placed before me, knowing that I have both the support of my fellow travelers in the program and my Higher Power, who is ever present."
	• Please do not rush through the readings so that we can absorb the material.

P a r t i c i p a n t	• <u>Step Three</u>
	• Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God.
	• <i>Spiritual Principles: Willingness and Accepting Help</i>

Moving in to Step Three, we see the third Step is merely a decision to ask our Higher Power to help us live courageously and sanely on a daily basis. One day at a time, we recover from the disease of family dysfunction. Step Three is underpinned by the ACA Solution, which is read at the opening of most adult child meetings. The ACA Solution is that we become our "own loving parent." Becoming our own loving parent involves seeing our "biological parents as the instruments of our existence." As The Solution states: Our actual parent is our Higher Power, whom some of us choose to call God."⁴⁴

Working Step Three in ACA means that we realize that our parents brought us into the world. However, we are children of God, seeking to reclaim our true nature or original selves. The Twelve Steps support this journey to the Inner Child or True Self.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, Step Three helps further free us from the generational shame and abuse wrought by dysfunctional parent or caregivers. By realizing that our actual parent is our Higher Power, we complete more of the separation-from-family work. This work is critical so that we can frame the past in its proper perspective while reaching for a brighter future. We gradually realize our painful past can become our greatest asset. We realize we can help others who lack hope and clarity about what happened to them as children we learn to tell our story in meetings and in sponsorship, we move from "hurting, to healing, to helping." By practicing Step Three we begin to stand on our own. We are clear on what we believe. We seek God's will with greater clarity. We come to believe that we really are children of God, as we understand God. We come to believe that God hears our prayers. We are less confused on what to pray about. We begin to have true choice.⁴⁶

In Step Three we open our minds to new possibilities. Some of us are comfortable with the word "God" for a Higher Power. Other will use Spirit of the Universe, Father of Light, Earth Mother, or the Divine. Some ACA members still investigating their spiritual path choose an ACA group as a power greater than themselves. Whatever we choose as our Higher Power, we make a decision to turn our will and life over to its care on a daily basis.⁴⁷

We turn over everything without bargaining with God as we understand God. We don't release some things to a Higher Power and hold onto others. If we struggle with turning over our will and life to a Higher Power, we can begin by turning over our self-hate, self-doubt, or fear. We can ask God to take our compulsions, resentments, and learned rage. Some of us will work up to turning over our will and life to the care of God. This is a process that we learn to trust.⁴⁸

The disease of family dysfunction manifests itself in dependency, addiction, and dissociative personalities. The disease can kill. Every day, adult children commit suicide, die in addiction, or die one day at a time in silent isolation, thinking they are hopeless. In ACA, we believe we were born whole and became fragmented in body, mind, and spirit through abandonment and shame. We need help find a way to return to our miracle state.⁴⁹

P We believe in a spiritual solution for the disease of family dysfunction.⁵⁰

a In addition to a deep sense of shame and abandonment, we believe that
r most of our emotional and mental distress can be traced to our steadfast
t nature to control. In ACA, we realize that control was the survival trait which
i kept us safe or alive in our dysfunctional homes. We controlled our thoughts,
c our voices, and many times our posture to escape detection from an abusive
i parent or caregiver. We know our parents were looking for imaginary cues to
p criticize us or verbally attack us. As adults we continue to control ourselves
a and our relationships in an unhealthy manner. This brings abandonment or
n predictable turmoil. We make promises to do better but eventually return to
t our obsessive need to compulsively arrange, question, worry, dust, wash,
lock, unlock, read, or hypervigilantly survey our thoughts and actions to feel
safe. But it is never enough. Experience shows there is little hope and little
spirituality in homes governed by smothering control.⁵¹

This Step is a bottomless well of hope, which is needed to deal with our
fear-based attempts to control ourselves and others. As we work the
remainder of the Twelve Steps, we will invariably struggle with control and
self-doubt. Such struggles are only natural since we relied on controlling our
feelings and emotions to survive in our home and relationships. Control meant
a sense of safety and predictability; however, we surrendered much of
personality and spirit through this manner of living. In Step Three we begin the
gradual and gentle process of easing off of stifling control and replacing it with
emotional freedom.⁵²

Each time we encounter the cliff face of control and feel overwhelmed by
steep walls, we must remember we can draw on an endless well of God's
grace. The Third Step, coupled with our association with other recovering
adult children, is an endless resource of hope and reassurance. We can tap it
indefinitely, one day at a time.⁵³

In Step Three we learned that our compulsion to control others and
ourselves blocks God's will for us, which is to live in peace with our feelings,
creativity, and spirituality. We learn that real choice is God's gift to us for
letting go. We learned that our attempts at choice before recovery were

actually veiled in control. In Step Three, we learned that choice often begins by facing our denial. As we grow in the program, our decisions include true choice that progresses to discernment. We learn to be still and know that God is God. ⁵⁴

ACA Third Step Prayer

God. I am willing to surrender my fears and to place my will and my life in your care one day at a time. Grant me the wisdom to know the difference between the things I can and cannot change. Help me to remember that I can ask for help. I am not alone. Amen ⁵⁵

- Following is the Step 3 Worksheet - Understanding our Higher Power of Our Choice.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.
- I will read the following worksheet.
- You will have 3 minutes to fill it in to the best of your ability.
- Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner for support if needed.

Step 3 Worksheet

Understanding our Higher Power of Our Choice

What I want my Higher Power to be	How do I become willing to trust my Higher Power?	Things to turn over to my Higher Power
<i>(a loving relationship, nurturing, caring, supportive, kind, always present)</i>	<i>(By totally surrendering my will, by facing my denial, forsake my need to control, learn how to pray, learn to ask for help)</i>	<i>(The Laundry List Traits, character defects, fears and anxieties)</i>

Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Three.

- Are there any questions about what we just read?
- We will now have our 15 minutes of sharing time with 3 minute shares.
- We will break up into small groups. Count off as needed. (if needed)
- I will let you know when the 15 minutes is over.
- Shares need to be kept to 3 minutes, please be considerate of others.
- Please share on what we just read or what is on your heart. If you feel comfortable you may share your worksheet(s).
- Please be considerate and give everyone time to share.
- We do not cross talk. Crosstalk means interrupting, referring to, commenting on, or using the content of what another person has said during the meeting.
- Just a reminder what is said at this meeting stays at this meeting.
- Please be respectful of our confidentiality.

— — — Upon return of small groups — — —

- Welcome back.
- At this time I would like to discuss the concept of sharing partners.
- Choosing a sharing partner from this group is suggested for support for the four weeks. Sharing the worksheets with a sharing partner, sponsor, fellow traveler, or your group is recommended, when you feel comfortable.
- This experience with a sharing partner can give the adult child insight to choosing a sponsor.
- Who would like to be sharing partner?
- If there is someone in the group you would like to have as a sharing partner, feel free to approach them after the meeting.
- Remember to review the readings and stay in touch with a sharing partner or sponsor during the week.
- Are there any questions?

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- In accordance with the 7th tradition, which states that each group will be self-supporting, we will pass a basket for donations.
- The 7th Tradition goes towards the use of this room, WSO, Intergroup and any other expenses we may have.
- Thank you for participating in our first week of Ready Set GO!! introducing the ACA program and introducing Steps 1, 2 and 3.
- Next week we will introduce Steps 4 and 5.
- Who would like to be the leader for Week #2?
- Refer to BRB pages 166-189 for more information about the inventory.
- We suggest that you read the following affirmations and slogans.

Affirmations - Steps One Through Three - Sponsors and Sponsees, and Slogans

Big Red Book and Workbook

ACA Step One Affirmations

ACA 12 Steps Workbook - Page 42

I am powerless over the effects of alcoholism and family dysfunction.

I am powerless over the Laundry List traits.

My life is unmanageable when I focus on others rather than myself.

I did not cause my parents' addiction or dysfunction.

My feelings and thoughts are separate from the thoughts of my parents and my family.

I can stop trying to heal or to change my family through my current relationships.

I can stop trying to change others.

I can stop condemning myself without mercy.

I am a valuable person.

ACA Step Two Affirmations

ACA 12 Steps Workbook - Page 56

By attending ACA meetings and working with my sponsor

I am being restored to clarity and sanity.

I am understanding the effects of addiction

and family dysfunction in my adult life today.

I am coming to believe that it was insane to think that I caused my parents' addiction or dysfunction. I was a child. They were the parents.

I am not unique.

I am not alone.

Step Three Affirmations: Let Go. Let God

ACA 12 Steps Workbook - Page 69

I am willing to consider releasing some control in my life.

I am willing to call someone when I feel the urge
to control another's thoughts or actions.

I believe that real choice comes from the God of my understanding
rather than my illusions of control and orderliness.

I desire real choice and discernment.

I surrender my family to God as I understand God.

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Affirmations for Sponsees (These Can Also Apply to the Sponsor)

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I can ask for help without feeling like I am a burden.

I am treating others with respect and expect others to treat me with respect.

I can be equal in a relationship with another person.

I am capable of selecting a healthy sponsor.

I have willingness to do whatever it takes to recover.

I am following the suggestions of my sponsor in my path of recovery.

Affirmations for Sponsors (These Can Also Apply to the Sponsee)

I have something to offer another person.

I can help someone with what I have learned in recovery.

I will share my experience instead of giving advice.

I will avoid “fixing” others or rescuing others.

I can help another ACA regardless of the type of abuse we experienced as children.

I am more alike than I am different from another person.

Program Slogans that Work

Big Red Book - Page 52

ACA is Simple but it is Not Easy

Live Beyond Mere Survival

There is Another Way to Live

One Day at a Time

Easy Does It

Keep it Simple

Progress Not Perfection

First Things First

This Pain Too Shall Pass

Let Go. Let God

H.A. L.T. - Don't get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired

Keep Coming Back

Name It, Don't Blame It

Ask For Help and Accept It

Pray and Pray Hard

Don't Just do Something. Sit There

Be Still and Know

There is no Healing Without Feeling

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- Will you please join me for our closing prayer, Gathered Together?

Gathered Together

Higher Power, gathered together we find great peace and serenity

We seek hope to become whole as we were created to be.

We find strength to deal with life as we grow in our program.

We trust that as we find courage, we will feel free and secure.

We are grateful to have the support of our group who understands us.

We believe that your presence in our life will give us all that we need.

We close our meeting with a feeling of belonging and being loved.

Keep Coming Back!!

It works if you work It and

You are Worth It!

Ready Set GO!! Week #2

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Who would like to be the leader for week two of Ready Set GO!!?

- Hi, my name is _____, I am an adult child.
- Welcome to week two of a Ready Set GO!! Meeting introducing Step 4 and Step 5.
- Will all who care to please join me in the Serenity Prayer?
- God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.
- Let's go around and introduce ourselves. I'll start.
 - Ready Set GO!! are closed ACA introductory meetings. We meet to introduce our ACA 12 Steps and ACA program in a structured four week time frame. We recognize all our 12 Traditions for safety within the group.
 - Ready Set GO!! Is an introduction for ACA newcomers to become acquainted with the ACA Twelve Steps and get clarity and an understanding of the ACA Program. Ready Set GO!! introduces the experienced member to a renewal of their commitment to working their program through the ACA 12 Steps. Ready Set GO!! prepares members for when they will feel ready to go to the ACA 12 Step Workbook. Feel free to leave your fears and anxieties behind you as you experience these introductory meetings.
 - The material is taken from our Big Red Book, the ACA 12 Step Workbook, and Strengthening My Recovery, the ACA meditation book. It requires those in attendance to listen to the material with an open mind and an open heart and in good faith with a desire to learn about ACA recovery and emotional sobriety.
 - Our objective is simple: to introduce members to the ACA program and introduce the ACA 12 Steps by bringing clarity and awareness to the realization that the ACA 12 Steps offer opportunities for solutions.

- Each step will contain a worksheet that may bring more clarity and understanding of each Step. We will set aside a few minutes to fill in the worksheet and to answer any questions. Appendix B will provide a complete version of the worksheets for copies as needed.
- There is no right or wrong way to do the worksheets. They can be done over time as we grow.
- Choosing a sharing partner from this group is suggested for support for the four weeks. Sharing the worksheets with a sharing partner, sponsor, fellow traveler, or your group is recommended, when you feel comfortable. This experience with a sharing partner can give the adult child insight to choosing a sponsor.
- Sponsors may be inclined to introduce Ready Set GO!! to their sponsees to begin their work together in ACA perhaps setting a flexible time frame to accommodate their needs.
- In each of the four weeks we encourage you to prepare for these meetings by reading the Laundry List Traits, The Problem, The Solution, ACA 12 Steps, ACA 12 Traditions, and The Promises in Part One before attending each Ready Set GO!! introductory meeting.
- As we begin, we remind ourselves to have an open mind and an open heart. Be gentle with yourself as you go through this experience of Ready Set GO!!. This brief encounter with the 12 Steps may prepare you to do the ACA 12 Steps Workbook when you choose to do it. Remember Ready Set GO!! is an introduction to ACA.
- Be in peace and let fear and anxiety leave you for this journey.
- I will read from Strengthening My Recovery related to Step Four: “On this day I allow myself to be honest and thorough, welcoming the fact that I am always learning more about myself.” p. 98

- In Steps Four and Five we will continue the process of self-discovery and self-awareness by making a written inventory of attitudes and behaviors. We also see the generational nature of this behavior and how it was transmitted to us by our dysfunctional parents or relatives. With ACA, we learn to forgive ourselves and our parents. We change our behavior.

- Please do not rush through the readings so we can fully absorb the material.

- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 4?

- **Step Four**

- **Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

- ***Spiritual Principles: Self-honesty and Courage***

In Steps Four and Five, we review in detail how we were raised. We remember the messages, situations, and feelings. We also look at how we react and think in relationships as adults. We tell our story to another person and to God, as we understand God.⁵⁶

In ACA, we inventory our family system in addition to inventorying our own behavior. Other Twelve Step fellowships tend to limit a review of family dynamics. In ACA, we look at our parent’s behavior, family roles, rules, messages, abuse, neglect, and how that affects us as adults. We balance the inventory of our family system with a thorough inventory of our own behavior.⁵⁷

It is not the purpose of the Twelve Steps of ACA to place blame on the parents or caregivers; however, the adult child also must not shield the parents during the inventory process.⁵⁸

Our cofounder, Tony A., believed that adult children could take a “blameless” inventory of his or her parents. That means the adult can name the types of abuse that occurred and the role playing necessary to survive the upbringing; however, with a “blameless” inventory, the adult child also realizes the generational nature of such abuse or neglect. The parents

were passing on some form of what was done to them.⁵⁹

We must balance taking responsibility for misdeeds committed as an adult with the knowledge that our mistakes probably have their origin in the abuse we endured as children. We seek balance. We don't want to use our childhood abuse as an excuse to avoid taking responsibility for our actions as adults. But we also do not want to belittle ourselves for these mistakes or abuses. Adult children can be brutally hard on themselves for making mistakes. We condemn ourselves and rage at ourselves with ease. This serves no good purpose and only means that we have learned to abuse ourselves. No one needs to beat up an adult child. We do it to ourselves long after our parents or relatives have stopped. We need to stop this self-condemning behavior. We can take full responsibility for our actions, knowing that our childhood abuse contributed to our abuses as adults. We also know that we are not blaming anyone for our adult behavior. We are learning to love ourselves. We can do this.⁶⁰

In Step Four, we also shatter the cardinal rules of family dysfunction. The "don't talk" rule that most of us learned as children is broken so that a self-inventory can be fully reached. Breaking this rule began in Step One with the admission of being powerless over the effects of alcoholism and family dysfunction. When we work Steps Four and Five, we also break the rules of "don't trust" and "don't feel" by listing and articulating our life story in a structured manner. We learn to trust the person to whom we tell our story. We feel the feelings that arise by sharing such information. This sharing of our story with our sponsor or informed counselor reveals destructive patterns in our adult lives while illuminating abuses from our childhood. We also begin to see our grief or stored loss lying beneath our decisions to wrong ourselves and others.⁶¹

In Step Four, the adult child learns to "name" the acts of abandonment, shame, and other forms of abuse practiced by dysfunctional parents. At the same time in Step Four, the adult child lists his or her own defects of character, acts of selfishness, and blame that allowed the adult child to rationalize destructive behavior or reject real solutions.⁶²

The key word to remember in working ACA's Fourth Step is "blameless." ACA founder Tony A believed that adult children should take a "searching and blameless inventory of our parents because in essence we had become them." Tony believed that we internalized our parents. We had become them in thinking and action even if we took steps to be different. While we focus primarily on ourselves in Step Four, we have added an inventory of the family to the process. ACA believes that we cannot take a searching and fearless inventory if we leave out the family.⁶³

Blame is not the purpose of Step Four or any of ACA's Twelve Steps. However, we can hold our parents and family accountable for their action and inaction. Blameless and accountability are the guideposts that steer us toward a balanced but searching inventory.⁶⁴

We avoid blame because we are aware of the generational nature of family dysfunction. Our parents passed on the seeds of shame and fear given to them. They were once children without a choice. They survived as we survived. While some parents were obviously sadistic or unrepentant, others did the best they could. These parents made a conscious decision to raise their children differently than they were raised. Many of these parents abstained from alcohol, yet passed on problematic fear and shame just the same. Some of these well-meaning parents learned to say affirming statements of love and encouragement. Yet, they still transferred their own self-doubt and lack of self-love in large measures. Many of us are the adult children of these parents. We have acted out with addiction or another self-harming behavior, continuing the disease of family dysfunction.⁶⁵

We stress fairness with our parents while holding them accountable for another reason as well. Many of us working Step Four realize we have harmed our own children. We have passed on what was done to us. Many of us have changed our behavior and made amends. However some of us could one day be the focus of an inventory of our own children arriving at the doors of ACA. This is another reason to take a blameless, yet fair, inventory of the family and parents. If we give fairness, we can hope for fairness.⁶⁶

While working Step Four and all of the ACA Steps, we encourage you to nurture yourself. We must balance this probing look at our behavior with gentleness. We must protect our Inner Child or True Self vigorously. At the same time, we cannot let discomfort or fear stop us from getting honest about our own behavior.⁶⁷

- For your convenience Tony A, our co-founder’s 12 Steps and more information are included in Appendix F. Pending/WSO
- We will introduce Ready Set GO!!’s “Blameless” 4th Step Inventory Worksheets.
- These inventory worksheets are intended to help us progress on our path to recovery and to find our voice and our truth by privately sharing them with our sharing partner.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B for copies as needed.
- There is no wrong or right way to do it.
- The 4th Step Inventory of Ready Set GO!! was created with a simple **Quick Check** guide to introduce the inventory process.
- This is a “Blameless” inventory to help us understand the generational nature of the **Dysfunctional Problems** while learning the impact they have had on our life.
- We have included definitions for the **Dysfunctional Problems** in the 4th Step Inventory. These definitions may be helpful filling out your inventory. As we begin to break through our denial we are likely to feel and realize the impact that these **Dysfunctional Problems** have had on our life. This could be painful to look at and acknowledge. We may search and pray to our Higher Power who we may have come to know from being introduced to us in the first three steps.
- Be gentle and kind with yourself, this is not easy.
- **Exercise 1** will introduce you to the **Dysfunctional Problems** by **people who have harmed you**. **Exercise 2** will introduce you to the **Dysfunctional Problems** by **people who you have harmed**.
- Inventorying these **Dysfunctional Problems** may take some time to complete. Be gentle with yourself by letting go of any fears or anxieties.

- As we acknowledge these **Dysfunctional Problems** read the **Definitions** for the **Healing Solutions** that show us how to **Seek Balance for Positive Results** by using the **Healing Solutions** that help us break out of our role as a victim.
- We have included definitions for the **Healing Solutions** in the 4th Step Inventory. These definitions may be helpful filling out your inventory. After sharing this inventory in detail with a sharing partner, sponsor, or therapist we may experience some of these **Healing Solutions** going through this process. These are positive things that we may never have experienced or hoped for before in our lives. We may notice them in tiny ways or they could have a huge impact on our recovery. The results will be different for all of us. There are no guarantees, only our determination to do the best we can do to the best of our ability. Our Higher Power will love us no matter what we accomplish and so we need to love ourselves unconditionally.
- The **Healing Solutions** are what it will take to overcome the **Dysfunctional Problems** and what we will gain from this process.
- It is suggested that you share your inventory at a later date with your sharing partner, sponsor or fellow traveler, sharing the **details** of your **Dysfunctional Problems** taking into account **Exercise 1 and 2** as you begin to piece together your story.
- These **Exercises** will help you when you are introduced to Steps 8 and 9.

Ready Set GO!!'s

“Blameless” 4th Step Inventory

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Step Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

- This is Ready Set GO!!'s introduction to the inventory process offering you awareness of your experience, strength and hope. (Refer BRB pp.166-189)
- First read across the columns to do a **Quick Check** of **Dysfunctional Problems** that apply to you. Read **Definitions** as needed.
- Go back to your check marks and complete **Exercise 1** insert **people who have harmed you.**
- Go back to your check marks and complete **Exercise 2** insert **people who you have harmed.**
- Take your time, leaving your fears and anxieties behind you.
- You will have 10 minutes to take a **Quick Check** of the **Dysfunctional Problems** that apply to you. Time allowing begin to fill in **Exercises 1 and 2.**
- Read **Definitions** for **Healing Solutions** that show us how to **Seek Balance for Positive Results.**
- Take the **Praise Exercise** balancing positive and spiritual qualities.
- **✓ Quick Check Marks** will be discussed in detail with your sharing partner later.
- Thoroughly complete the worksheets at home with the support of your sharing partner if needed.

Quick Check			Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Seek Balance for Positive Results	
Dysfunctional Problems	Definitions	✓	People who have harmed you	People who you have harmed	Healing Solutions	Definitions
Laundry List Traits	A list of characteristics we seem to have in common due to being brought up in an alcoholic and/or dysfunctional family. Some of these are: afraid of people and authority, addictive lives, stuff our feelings, terrified of abandonment, approval seekers, self-sacrificial, addicted to excitement, confuse love and pity, judge ourselves harshly, reactors rather than actors, para-alcoholics(co-dependents). <small>SMR, Front Cover Workbook</small>				Laundry List Workbook	Take a look at the different perceptions that are a part of these traits and learn how to integrate them or let go of them. With this action we will begin to find emotional sobriety.
Family Secrets	These are secrets, inconsistencies, and wrongs that are contrary to the family image. <small>Workbook p. 82</small> Every family has a secret...but how far will people go to protect these secrets? And how do they move past the truth once it is uncovered?				Overcome Denial	Breaking through the wall of dealing with our pain and suffering that we tried to ignore for many years.
Shame	Shame tends to make you feel isolated, inferior and unwanted. When shame is intense the adult child's vision is distorted and perceptions change. Shame is the deep sense that our souls are inherently flawed. <small>BRB p. 10</small> A person, action, or situation that brings a loss of respect or honor.				Self Love	Start to let ourselves appreciate the true self that God meant us to be, the innocent, pure, thoughtful, loving child of God.

Quick Check			Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Seek Balance for Positive Results	
Dysfunctional Problems	Definitions	✓	People who have harmed you	People who you have harmed	Healing Solutions	Definitions
Abandonment	A subjective emotional state in which people feel undesired, left behind, insecure, or discarded. People experiencing emotional abandonment may feel at a loss, cut off from a crucial source of sustenance that has been withdrawn either suddenly or through a process of erosion. SMR, Front Cover Workbook				Loving Parent	The part of ourselves that is free from the Critical Parent. The Loving Parent can give us what we need now. When we were children our needs were not met by our parents. We learn how to be a Loving Parent following the principles of the steps.
Fear	A feeling of anxiety concerning the outcome of something or the safety and well-being of someone: A distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid.				Gentleness	Being kind, caring, thoughtful of others and ourselves. The quality of being tender, or mild-mannered.
Stored Anger (Resentments)	Strong displeasure; anger; hostility provoked by a wrong experienced.				Forgiveness	The intentional and voluntary process by which a victim undergoes a change in feelings and attitude regarding an offense, lets go of negative emotions such as vengefulness, with an increased ability to wish the offender well. Forgiveness is different from condoning, excusing, forgetting, pardoning, and reconciliation. In certain contexts, forgiveness is a legal term for absolving or giving up all claims on account of debt, loan, obligation, or other claims.

Quick Check			Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Seek Balance for Positive Results	
Dysfunctional Problems	Definitions	✓	People who have harmed you	People who you have harmed	Healing Solutions	Definitions
Dysfunctional Relationships	Relationships that do not perform their appropriate function; that is, they do not emotionally support the participants, foster communication among them, appropriately challenge them, or prepare or fortify them for life in the larger world. <small>Workbook</small>				Self Respect	Pride and confidence in oneself; a feeling that one is behaving with honor and dignity.
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	An anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as survivor guilt, reliving the trauma in dreams, numbness and lack of involvement with reality, or recurrent thoughts and images.				Contentment	A state of happiness and satisfaction.
Frozen Feelings	These are frozen emotions that the child was not allowed to feel that never go away. These emotions stay buried, contributing to limiting beliefs and negative self views. It is not until this pent-up energy is expelled, expressed and processed in the presence of an understanding, safe and validating other that the emotion is released.				Rigorous Honesty	The ability to be totally and completely honest with oneself and sharing that with trusted others.

Quick Check			Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Seek Balance for Positive Results	
Dysfunctional Problems	Definitions	✓	People who have harmed you	People who you have harmed	Healing Solutions	Definitions
Sexual Abuse	Criminal sexual activity, especially that involving a victim below the age of sexual consent or incapable of sexual consent.				Courage	The choice and willingness to confront agony, pain, danger, uncertainty or intimidation. Moral courage is the ability to act rightly in the face of popular opposition, shame, scandal, discouragement, or personal loss.
Physical Abuse	Is an act of another party involving contact intended to cause feelings of physical pain, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm.				Loving Kindness	Tenderness and consideration toward others.
Emotional Abuse	The debasement of a person's feelings that causes the individual to perceive himself or herself as inept, not cared for, and worthless.				Trust	Firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something.

Praise Exercise

These assets will help balance positive and spiritual qualities while looking at Step Four. BRB p. 188

Sit quietly and circle at least 10 assets:	
strong	humorous
sensitive	willing
intelligent	compassionate
courteous	talented
honest	organized
spontaneous	creative
loving	a listener
spiritual	trustworthy
tenacious	judicious
accepting	modest
prompt	kind
hard working	a friend
An ACA member	

Repeat, I am _____.

For each circled asset.

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You have been introduced to ***Ready Set GO!!'s "Blameless" Step Four Inventory.*** You have balanced this INVENTORY with positive traits that include the courage you exhibited by completing the introduction to this challenging Step. Your journey is still unfolding. You are not alone. Ask for help and accept it.

Set up an appointment with your sponsor or sharing partner to try out Step Five.⁶⁸

My 5th Step Date is: _____ Time: _____

Important Note: *With RSG being an Introduction more thorough work will be done when you go through the ACA Workbook and are working these following Steps.*

Before your Fifth Step date arrives, read all of the section on Step Five and learn about the exact nature of your wrongs. In Step Five, you will also find instructions on what to do when you have completed Step Five. Many members work Steps Six and Seven immediately following their Fifth Step. These instructions in Step Five will guide you through the sequence of Steps Six and Seven.⁶⁹

A Fifth Step Tool for the ACA Sponsor

Appendix B (BRB Page 631-643) has an outline for your sponsor or the person hearing your Fifth Step. This outline helps the sponsor, spiritual guide, or mentor guide you through Step Five and prepare you for Steps Six and Seven.⁷⁰

Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Four.

- Are there any questions?
- We will now have our 15 minutes of sharing time with 3 minute shares.
- We will break up into small groups. Count off as needed. (if needed)
- I will let you know when the 15 mins is over.
- Shares need to be kept to 3 minutes, please be considerate of others.
- Please share on what we just read or what is on your heart. The 4th Step inventories need to be shared privately with your sharing partner. You can use this time to share your feelings and experience about this step.
- Please be considerate and give everyone time to share.
- We do not cross talk. Crosstalk means interrupting, referring to, commenting on, or using the content of what another person has said during the meeting.
- Just a reminder what is said at this meeting stays at this meeting.
- Please be respectful of our confidentiality.
- Welcome back.
- In Step Five we tell our story with clarity and humility to our sponsor or sharing partner. We will learn to trust ourselves and break down the walls of isolation we have hidden behind.
- I will read from Strengthening My Recovery related to Step Five: “On this day I will be honest with the most important person I will ever get to know: Me.”
- Please do not rush through the readings so we can fully absorb the material.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 5?

Participant

- **Step Five**
- **Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**
- ***Spiritual Principles: Honesty and Trust***

There is no way around Steps Four or Five. We must go through them to get to the other side, to find the God of our understanding waiting there with a timeless embrace. This is our experience. Thousands of adult children have completed Step Five and found a peace and serenity not known before. They are waiting for you on the other side of Step Five. They called upon the inner strength which helped them survive a dysfunctional upbringing. They used that inner strength to make it through Step Five with room to spare. You have this inner strength by the very fact you have completed the first four Steps of the program.⁷¹

Step Five gives us a chance to finally talk about what matters to someone we trust. We give our Fifth Step without grand promises to be perfect or strive for perfection. We tell our story to another person with honesty and sincerity and leave the results to God as we understand God. We can finally give ourselves breathing room to change one day at a time. We claim our humanness and our position in the world.⁷²

We approach Step Five with an attitude of self-love and trust that our Higher Power is with us and will not abandon us. We have taken a hard look at ourselves and our family of origin in Step Four. We have held nothing back. We are now preparing to release years of stored grief, shame, and hurtful secrets to God and to someone who understands.⁷³

The spiritual principles of Step Five are honesty and trust. We must have self-honesty about the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional home. The effects are our survival traits, which include people-pleasing, becoming addicted or marrying an addict, fearing authority figures, and feeling guilty when we ask for what we need. We often confuse love and pity, and we tend to “love” people we can rescue. We also can be the rescued. We stay in abusive relationships because they resemble how we were raised. We are terrified of abandonment so we tolerate high levels of abuse or neglect as adults. The abuse seems normal.⁷⁴

In Step Five, we must also have self-honesty about those we have harmed, including ourselves.⁷⁵

If we minimize our wrongs or fail to see their exact nature, we fall short of

the mark of self-honesty in Step Five. Self-honesty does not mean self harm. We want rigorous honesty, but we do not want to abuse ourselves by being rigorously scathing. If we overstate our wrongs and beat ourselves up, we tend to drift into an attitude of martyrdom, or we assume the victim posture.⁷⁶

Step Five is where we embrace a more balanced view of who we are as sons, daughters, citizens, employees, business owners, and spiritual seekers. Since we come from homes that were out of balance with abuse or hypercritical attitudes, it is not easy for us to embrace our positive qualities. But we have such traits as compassion, trust, intelligence, and spirituality. Other positive traits are friendliness, honesty, and tenacity. We are not the disease of family dysfunction, but we have acted on harmful traits developed in that family when we were children. We are facing our behaviors in Step Five and making an honest attempt to change. We can feel good about this effort and our good character no matter what our story reveals.⁷⁷

When we look at the exact nature of our wrongs, we see that we have harmed ourselves based on our sense of being unacceptable, inferior, or lost. Further examination of our wrongs reveals there can be both legal and spiritual consequences to our actions. When we break the law there is a legal wrong, but we also see a spiritual separation as well. We separate ourselves from our Higher Power with our behavior. We experience spiritual loss.⁷⁸

But the adult child should also realize that the exact nature of a wrong can also involve loss. That is the secret in understanding Step Five. All of these harmful acts add up to loss. Each time we harmed another person or ourselves, we lost a piece of ourselves. Each time we shamed our own child or spouse, there was loss. Each time we judged ourselves without mercy for common mistakes, there was loss. Each day we remained in an abusive, dependent relationship there was loss.⁷⁹

Fifth Step Prayer

Divine Creator. Thank you for this chance to speak honestly with another person about the events of my life.

Help me accept responsibility for my actions.

Let me show compassion for myself and my family

as I revisit my thinking and actions

that have blocked me from your love.

Restore my child within.

Restore my feelings.

Restore my trust in myself. Amen.⁸⁰

- The next page is the Step 5 Worksheet - Dealing and Balancing with the Losses.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.
- Share what the **Check Marks** ✓ mean under **Dysfunctional Problems**, who have harmed you and who you have harmed and who did that to you.
- Sharing the worksheets with a sharing partner, sponsor or fellow traveler is recommended.
- This is not to shame or blame anyone but to take notice that it is your truth and it is real.
- Refer to the **Healing Solutions** to be confident that this is a gift we shall receive from taking this action.
- Be gentle with yourself when you tell your story in detail to your sharing partner, sponsor, or fellow traveler.
- You will have 5 minutes to fill in the worksheet to the best of your ability.
- Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner for support if needed.
- I will read the following worksheet.

Step 5 Worksheet

Dealing and Balancing with the Losses

Dysfunctional Problems <i>Hurts, abuses, losses</i>	Who harmed me?	What can I learn and how will it help me?
Dysfunctional Problems <i>Hurts, abuses, losses</i>	Who have I harmed?	What can I learn and how will it help me?

Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Five.

- Are there any questions?
- We will now have our 15 minutes of sharing time with 3 minute shares.
- We will break up into small groups. Count off as needed. (if needed)
- I will let you know when the 15 minutes is over.
- Shares need to be kept to 3 minutes, please be considerate of others.
- Please share on what we have just read or whatever may be on your heart. If you feel comfortable you may share your worksheet(s).
- Please be considerate and give everyone time to share.
- We do not crosstalk. Crosstalk means interrupting, referring to, commenting on, or using the contents of what another person has said during the meeting.
- Just a reminder what is said at this meeting stays at this meeting.
- Please be respectful of our confidentiality.
- Welcome back.
- In accordance with the 7th tradition, which states that each group will be self-supporting, we will pass a basket for donations.
- The 7th Tradition goes towards the use of this room, WSO, Intergroup and any other expenses we may have.
- Who would like to be a sharing partner?
- Who would like to be the leader for Week Three?
- Thank you for participating in our second week of Ready Set GO!!
- Next week we will introduce Steps 6, 7, 8 and 9.
- Please read the readings on the day of our next meeting.
- Will you please join me for our Closing Prayer, Gathered Together?

Gathered Together

Higher Power, gathered together we find great peace and serenity.
 We seek hope to become whole as we were created to be.
 We find strength to deal with life as we grow in our program.
 We trust that as we find courage we will feel free and secure.
 We are grateful to have the support of our group who understands us.
 We believe that your presence in our life will give us all that we need.
 We close our meeting with a feeling of belonging and being loved.
 Keep Coming Back! It works if you work it! And you are worth it!

Ready Set GO!! Week #3

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Who would like to be the leader for this week of Ready Set GO!!?

- Hi, my name is _____, I am an adult child.
- Welcome to week three of a Ready Set GO!! Meeting introducing Steps 6, 7, 8 and 9.
- Will all who care to please join me in the Serenity Prayer?
- God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.
- Let's go around and introduce ourselves. I'll start.
 - Ready Set GO!! are closed ACA introductory meetings. We meet to introduce our ACA 12 Steps and ACA program in a structured four week time frame. We recognize all our 12 Traditions for safety within the group.
 - Ready Set GO!! Is an introduction for ACA newcomers to become acquainted with the ACA Twelve Steps and get clarity and an understanding of the ACA Program. Ready Set GO!! introduces the experienced member to a renewal of their commitment to working their program through the ACA 12 Steps. Ready Set GO!! prepares members for when they will feel ready to go to the ACA 12 Step Workbook. Feel free to leave your fears and anxieties behind you as you experience these introductory meetings.
 - The material is taken from our Big Red Book, the ACA 12 Step Workbook, and Strengthening My Recovery, the ACA meditation book. It requires those in attendance to listen to the material with an open mind and an open heart and in good faith with a desire to learn about ACA recovery and emotional sobriety.
 - Our objective is simple: to introduce members to the ACA program and introduce the ACA 12 Steps by bringing clarity and awareness to the realization that the ACA 12 Steps offer opportunities for solutions.

- Each step will contain a worksheet that may bring more clarity and understanding of each Step. We will set aside a few minutes to fill in the worksheet and to answer any questions. Appendix B will provide a complete version of the worksheets for extra copies. There is no right or wrong way to do the worksheets. They can be done over time as we grow.
- Choosing a sharing partner from this group is suggested for support for the four weeks. Sharing the worksheets with a sharing partner, sponsor, fellow traveler, or your group is recommended, when you feel comfortable. This experience with a sharing partner can give the adult child insight to choosing a sponsor.
- Sponsors may be inclined to introduce Ready Set GO!! to their sponsees to begin their work together in ACA perhaps setting a flexible time frame to accommodate their needs.
- In each of the four weeks we encourage you to prepare for these meetings by reading the Laundry List Traits, The Problem, The Solution, ACA 12 Steps, ACA 12 Traditions, and The Promises in Part One before attending each Ready Set GO!! introductory meeting.
- As we begin, we remind ourselves to have an open mind and an open heart. Be gentle with yourself as you go through this experience of Ready Set GO!!. This brief encounter with the 12 Steps may prepare you to do the ACA 12 Steps Workbook when you choose to do it. Remember Ready Set GO!! is an introduction to ACA.
- Be in peace and let fear and anxiety leave you for this journey.
- In Step Six we will become willing to have God remove our defects of character.
- I will read from Strengthening My Recovery related to Step Six “On this day I will gratefully and joyously remember that my defects are losing their hold on me as my recovery grows.” p. 181

- Please do not rush through the readings so we can fully absorb the material.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 6?

- **Step Six**
- **Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**
- **Spiritual Principle: Willingness**

In Step Six we realize that we have defects of character like most of the population in the world. However, our defects of character tend to be entrenched and trap us in unfulfilling relationships and block us from receiving the love of a Higher Power. Our defects can include procrastination, lust, envy, greed, selfishness, and judgementalness. We also have survival traits or common behaviors. The survival traits are the 14 characteristics of The Laundry List (Problem). These common behaviors represent the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional home. They are in a different category than defects of character.⁸¹

Our survival traits include people-pleasing, addictiveness, hypervigilance, and stuffing our feelings to avoid conflict or arguments. We often confuse love with pity and tend to “love” those we can rescue. Even though we have identified such traits in Step Four, we are still new at this. We need focus to find our best course of action for release. Many adult children take the path of removal for character defects and take the path of integration for the survival traits.⁸²

There is a key distinction between defects of character and the survival traits of The Laundry List.⁸³

The key to becoming free of character defects while making peace with our survival traits involves a three-pronged approach with willingness, prayer, and time.⁸⁴

Willingness is our most powerful ally because it means we are teachable when it comes to addressing our defects of character. By being teachable, we learn to discern how much effort to put into changing our defects and when to get out of the way and let God handle it.

THE LAUNDRY LIST TREE



The Branches Laundry List 14 Traits

- Para alcoholics
- Codependency
- Reactors rather than actors
- Judge ourselves harshly
- Stuff our feelings
- Afraid of people and authority figures
- Confuse love and pity
- Addictive lives
- Addicted to excitement
- Approval seekers
- Self-sacrificial
- Terrified of abandonment
- Frightened by angry people
- Live life from the viewpoint of victims

The Fruit Defects of Character

- Mistrust
- Feeling Superior
- Procrastination
- Greed
- Pettiness
- Envy
- Lust
- Perfectionism
- Isolation
- Dishonesty
- Judgmental
- Self Centeredness

On the Cover

The front cover of the ACA 12 Steps Workbook depicts **The Laundry List Tree**, which represents the traits of an adult child. The tree also shows the distinction between the traits which are learned in childhood and the defects of character that develop later in life. The Laundry List Traits represents the limbs while the character defects are the fruit. Page 211

Becoming willing to have a Higher Power remove our defects of character can range from being painless, to moments of discomfort to agony.⁸⁵

We now have friends and a Higher Power to rely on. We are not alone.⁸⁶

Our experience reveals that there is value in emotional pain. With support, and with gentleness, we can find our healthy pain and its healing release.⁸⁷

By facing our pain, we learn that we really are not alone in our suffering. When we find ourselves in this kind of pain in Step Six, we stay close to meetings and keep our faces turned toward God as we understand God.⁸⁸

With Step Six, you are taking the time to become entirely ready. You are about to ask God to humbly remove your shortcomings with a Seventh Step prayer. Step Seven states: “Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.”⁸⁹

We have a list of our defects of character. We prepared our list by reviewing our Fourth Step inventory. We also understand our survival traits and their function in our life. These are The Laundry List traits that we respect but which now must be further lessened or integrated.⁹⁰

Our character defects and survival traits are old friends we are beginning to bid farewell.⁹¹

By now, we have stopped punishing ourselves. We are asking God, as we understand God, to help us become entirely ready to have these defects of character removed. We must realize that good intentions do not work in removing our defects of character. We need help from a power greater than ourselves to achieve Step Six results.⁹²

- Next page is the the Step 6 Check List Worksheet.
- Feel free to place check marks as they are being read.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.

Step 6 Check List Worksheet

Check Defects of Character and Laundry List Traits

I am willing to have removed and/or integrated by my Higher Power

To be done over time as I progress.

Defects of Character	
	Mistrust
	Feeling Superior
	Procrastination
	Greed
	Pettiness
	Envy
	Lust
	Perfectionism
	Isolation
	Dishonesty
	Judgmental
	Self Centeredness

Laundry List Traits	
	para alcoholics
	codependency
	reactors rather than actors
	judge ourselves harshly
	stuff our feelings
	afraid of people and authority figures
	confuse love and pity
	addictive lives
	addicted to excitement
	approval seekers
	self-sacrificial
	terrified of abandonment
	frightened by angry people
	live life from the viewpoint of victims

Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Six.

- In Step 7 we learn to remove defects of character and integrate our Laundry List survival traits. We transform them into spiritual assets when possible.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 7?

• **Step Seven**

• **Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.**

• ***Spiritual Principle: Humility***

As we approach Step Seven, we take time to notice that we have taken a fearless and thorough look at ourselves and our family of origin.⁹³

In Step Seven, we realize we cannot remove our shortcomings without the help of a Higher Power. We may have had moments of freedom from our defects, but they seem to return or take on a new form if we fail to ask for God’s intervention. To our horror, we see a defect reappear in a new obsession or new twist that is torturous to face alone. In Step Seven, we muster all the trust or faith that we can. We rely upon God to remove our defects of character. We humbly ask God, as we understand God, to remove our shortcomings.⁹⁴

For removal of our defects of character, we sit in a relaxed position and concentrate on becoming entirely willing. We also become willing to integrate our survival traits. We may meditate and pray. When we are ready, we repeat the Seventh Step prayer for each defect or survival trait we wish to have removed or integrated. Do not be concerned if you are not clear if you are addressing a defect or survival trait. God will understand. Humbly ask God, as you understand God, to remove your defects of character.⁹⁵

When we are ready, we repeat the **Seventh Step prayer** for **each defect or survival trait** we wish to have removed or integrated.

Seventh Step Prayer - Character Defects

God. I am now ready that you should remove from me all my defects of character, which block me from accepting your divine love and living with true humility toward others. Renew my strength so that I might help myself and others along this path of recovery. BRB pp.220

“I humbly ask you to:

“Remove my defect of _____ . Amen.”

Select Defects of Character:	
Mistrust	Lust
Feeling Superior	Perfectionism
Procrastination	Isolation
Greed	Dishonesty
Pettiness	Judgmental
Envy	Self Centeredness

Seventh Step Prayer - Laundry List Traits

God. I am now ready that you should integrate my survival traits, which block me from accepting your divine love.

Grant me wholeness. BRB p. 221

“I humbly ask you to:

“Integrate my trait of _____ . Amen.”

Laundry List Traits survival traits or common behaviors:	
para alcoholics	addicted to excitement
codependency	approval seekers
reactors rather than actors	self-sacrificial
judge ourselves harshly	terrified of abandonment
stuff our feelings	frightened by angry people
afraid of people and authority figures	live life from the viewpoint of victims
confuse love and pity	addicted to excitement
addictive lives	approval seekers

With our character defects and survival traits addressed, we rely upon our Step Seven humility to prepare us for the amends process in Steps Eight and Nine. Humility will lead us as we find our path of self-forgiveness while making things right for those we have harmed.

Step Seven is an ongoing process. We can work this Step almost anywhere and anytime we feel the need to have a character defect removed. If we slip into judging another ACA member wrongfully, we can say “God. Please remove my shortcoming of judgementalness.”⁹⁶

Humility is not humiliation; however, some adult children have humiliated themselves and found humility. Humiliation tends to come from our need to harm ourselves by reenacting the shame from our childhood. Without help, our toxic shame from the past will find a way to express itself in our adult lives no matter how perfect we act and no matter how hard we try to control ourselves or others. The shame finds a way to well up. We are horrified by its expression in relationships or event and our participation in it.⁹⁷

Humility comes from God and is a sibling of anonymity, a foundational principle of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. Through anonymity, we practice service with love. We seek to be of maximum service to our Higher Power and others.⁹⁸

With humility we find that our will aligns with God’s will on a more frequent basis. True humility is the willingness to seek and do God’s will with our best effort. We know that we are not perfect and know we could fall short. Yet, we try our best to live this Step and obtain its spiritual intent of removing our shortcomings through humility.⁹⁹

In addition to an inner peace and a glimpse of God’s will, humility also brings an unexpected burst of creative energy for many adult children. Since we have backed away from trying to control others, we suddenly realize we have more energy to do things for ourselves. We have more time to attend concerts, go hiking, or begin a book of poems or finish one. Many adult children take their Inner Children to the circus, or buy watercolors and spend afternoons painting and mixing colors to see what happens.¹⁰⁰

We reparent ourselves by listing any problematic thinking or behavior that might linger after completing Step Seven. We strive to be free of these defects of character, but we also remind ourselves that we have positive qualities. Through humility, we can ask our Higher Power to help us avoid picking up and using a defect of character. We humbly ask our Higher Power to help us address our remaining defects. In this exercise we seek balance in our lives. We avoid focusing only on our problematic behavior. List your positive qualities across from problematic behavior that continues to affect your life. We reparent ourselves with the positive qualities.¹⁰¹

Example:¹⁰²

BRB p. 226

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<u>Continued Defects</u>	↔	<u>Balance/Reparent with</u>
Self-centered	↔	Selflessness
Not always honest	↔	Rigorous honesty
Manipulative	↔	Sincerity
Perfectionist	↔	Compromise

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- Following is Step 7 Worksheet - Problematic Behaviors and Positive Qualities.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.
- Feel free to check off the Problematic Behaviors and the Positive Qualities that apply to you as we read.
- Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner for support if needed.

Step 7 Worksheets

#1 and #2

#1 Check Problematic Behaviors that Continue to Affect my Life	
	Abrupt
	Aloof
	Argumentative
	Boisterous
	Blunt
	Cold
	Critical
	Domineering
	Fearful
	Greedy
	Hateful
	Inconsiderate
	Irritable
	Miserable
	Resentful
	Sanctimonious
	Suspicious
	Thoughtless
	Timid
	Troublesome
	Ungrateful
	Unfulfilled
	Vengeful
	Weakness
	Worthless

#2 Check Positive Qualities to Balance/Reparent Myself	
	Admirable
	Agreeable
	Balanced
	Calm
	Capable
	Courageous
	Compassionate
	Dedicated
	Efficient
	Enthusiastic
	Flexible
	Forgiving
	Good natured
	Humble
	Objective
	Open
	Patient
	Profound
	Punctual
	Reliable
	Respectful
	Satisfaction
	Spontaneous
	Tolerant
	Warm

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Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Seven.

- Are there any questions about what we just read?
- We will now have our 15 minutes of sharing time with 3 minute shares.
- We will break up into small groups. Count off as needed. (if needed)
- I will let you know when the 15 minutes is over.
- Shares need to be kept to 3 minutes, please be considerate of others.
- Please share on what we just read or what is on your heart. If you feel comfortable you may share your worksheets.
- Please be considerate and give everyone time to share.
- We do not cross talk. Crosstalk means interrupting, referring to, commenting on, or using the content of what another person has said during the meeting.
- Just a reminder what is said at this meeting stays at this meeting.
- Please be respectful of our confidentiality.

— — — Upon return of small groups — — —

- Welcome back.
- In Step Eight we will become willing to make amends for our inappropriate behaviors. We take responsibility for our actions and feelings. We also learn to be gentle with ourselves and to protect our Inner Child during this process.
- I will read from Strengthening My Recovery related to Step Eight: “On this day I will stay current with the amends I owe myself, and then work with those I may owe others.” p. 224
- Please do not rush through the readings so we can fully absorb the material.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 8?

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- **Step Eight**
- **Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.**
- ***Spiritual Principles: Willingness and Self-forgiveness***

In Step Eight we make a list of the people we have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all. While making such a list, we are also mindful of our Inner Child and the need to protect the child within from harm during the amends process. While we will concentrate here on willingness and making the list, we must realize that many adult children have families that remain in denial about family addiction or dysfunction. Walking into your home and announcing that you are an adult child might bring an unintended effect. We urge caution for some circumstances; however, we do not let fear or being uncomfortable stop us from making this important list of our wrongs.¹⁰³

With Step Eight and Step Nine we are strengthening our commitment to changing our lives. We are doing something that is not easy but which will build confidence and set us free. We are moving past our comfort zone. We are moving further away from our dependent, people-pleasing selves toward our new home. We are improving a real connection with our Higher Power.¹⁰⁴

Making an Eighth Step list of those we have harmed and facing our part is an act of courage. This outward courage is a reflection of our inward strength that has been there all along. How could we have survived and arrived at ACA without this inner courage and without a Higher Power? While we once thought we survived by coincidence, we are now beginning to believe in divine intervention at some level. Not all of us can put our finger on it, but many of us know we should not be here. We should not have survived, but we did. We certainly should not have made it to ACA where we now sit contemplating a list of people we have harmed and feeling confident enough to follow through with amends. Many of us who have been locked up or locked down, realize we are lucky as well to have this chance. We want to be sincere. We want to follow through and contribute to society in a meaningful manner. We also want to be the best we can be for our immediate families. We want to finally be emotionally, spiritually, and

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physically present with them.¹⁰⁵

In Step Eight, we are still learning to trust ourselves and to stand with ourselves without fading. If we balk at forgiving ourselves, we face this doubt and affirm ourselves. We get back to the business of self-forgiveness. We show self-forgiveness when we place our name at the top of the Eighth Step list. We also show self-forgiveness by listening to the words we use to describe ourselves. Where we once described ourselves as “lazy,” “mean,” or “incapable of love,” we now describe ourselves in a gentler tone and with language that reflects the growing love inside of us. We begin to hear ourselves say: “I thought I was unlovable, but in fact I am a precious child of God. I am a miracle.”¹⁰⁶

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- I will read the Step 8 Amends List Worksheet.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.
- You will have 3 minutes to fill it in to the best of your ability.
- Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner for support if needed.

Step 8 Amends List Worksheet

Person	Relationship	Make Amends For	Behaviors That Will Change

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Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Eight.

- Going onto Step Nine we balance taking responsibility for our inappropriate behavior with being aware that we also are protecting a wounded child within. We do not balk at making difficult amends, but we lovingly reparent ourselves during this process as well.
- I will read from Strengthening My Recovery related to Step Nine: “On this day I will practice new, trusting behavior with my ACA friends. I will continue to learn healthier ways of communicating that will keep me from leaving others for the wrong reasons.” p.113
- Please do not rush through the readings so we can fully absorb the material.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 9?

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- **Step Nine**
- **Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**
- ***Spiritual Principles: Forgiveness and Courage***

Step Nine can be one of the greatest recovery moments that we will ever experience in ACA. While the Step can appear daunting, Step Nine is one of the fellowship’s best kept secrets. The emotional and spiritual rewards of this Step are like a great hidden treasure. We cannot tell you how the amends process will turn out for you, but we can promise fulfillment and growth that will exceed your expectations if this Step is faced with honesty, sincerity, and thoroughness.¹⁰⁷

We liken the Steps leading up to Step Nine as a spiritual ropes course. The challenge course has involved risk, group support, and the realization of inner courage.¹⁰⁸

We see no blame for anyone for what we are about to do in Step Nine. We are not blaming our parents or ourselves. We are willing to make amends to those we have harmed so that we can be free to serve God and

society. During the amends process, we will protect ourselves and our Inner Child, but we will not shrink from this important Step. We feel as if we are closer to God, and we want to live and let live. We are learning to reparent ourselves with love and gentleness. The sky is clear. We step off into Step Nine.¹⁰⁹

Step Nine is about mending relationships with others and ourselves. The Step also involves cleaning up the wreckage of our past and being willing to release resentments. In some cases, an amends will help restore a relationship. In other cases, an amends will bring closure to a past relationship or association.¹¹⁰

The emotional and spiritual rewards for making our amends are awesome. Many such benefits are intangible but they assure us that we are finally making greater progress in our lives. We are truly involved in real behaviors that are bringing change into our lives. In Step Nine, we are bringing together the pieces of our spiritual blueprint created by the preceding Steps. We are building our new home. We are turning on switches and opening windows installed by the hands of the Spirit of the Universe. There is still work to be done, but we are on our way. We have our foundation in place.¹¹¹

We approach Step Nine with humility and with a sense that we are about to make a significant shift in our lives. We are breaking the shackles of unhealthy dependence and carried shame. With the support of ACA, we understand we can lay down the guilt and shame we have carried from past behavior. We realize that this is a chance to address behavior that we thought was unforgivable. For years, many of us have carried guilt about some thoughts and actions. Many of these behaviors are a reenactment of what was done to us as children. Some of us have struggled horribly with these behaviors, believing we were evil or hopeless. We may have even tried to change but failed. We thought we were unique. Some of our behavior has been disturbing and perhaps outside the bounds of law. With Step Nine, we are naming what we have done and making amends for what we have done. With the help of ACA, our worst acts become forgivable if we are humble and seek help from a Higher Power. Honesty is a must as well.¹¹²

We approach our amends list with an attitude of neutrality. We are not judging ourselves or others for their wrongdoings. We want to focus on our own missteps and not on the other person.¹¹³

During our amends, we don't attempt to educate people about ACA unless they ask. Even then we keep it brief unless they sincerely want to hear more. We don't recruit people to ACA in our amends process. We also don't bring up our newfound spirituality unless the moment is appropriate. It is not wise to meet someone we have harmed and announce our new or renewed focus on God. To do so places us at risk of being branded a religious crank.¹¹⁴

Amends vary in type and form, but keep in mind that amends means making things right. Our first amends should be to ourselves. We have harmed ourselves with codependency, drugs, sex, work, gambling, and food like no other people on the planet.¹¹⁵

We are claiming our spot in ACA. We matter. We can forgive ourselves.¹¹⁶

We use our inner courage to make a start. With our amends, we make no excuses for our behaviors, but we promise to do our best to change. We make practical statements about change instead of uttering grand resolutions or windy claims to be different. We want our actions, rather than our words, to show that we have changed.¹¹⁷

Step 9 - Suggested - Verbal Amends

In making an amends, we might say:

“I am involved in a program in which I am learning to change my behavior and to live more honestly and openly. Part of the process involves making amends to people I have harmed with my behavior. I am making amends to you for _____ (name the behavior, action, or other). I want to make it right. I am not making excuses, but I have harmed people based on my lack of knowledge about living, I am changing my behavior.”¹¹⁸

- I will read the Step 9 Amends Process Worksheet.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.
- You will have 3 minutes to fill it in to the best of your ability.
- Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner for support if needed.

Step 9 Amends Process Worksheet

Naming what I have done	Making things right	Actions for change
<i>Example: harmed my true self with codependency, drugs, sex, work, gambling, food, guilt and shame</i>	<i>Example: be humble, seek help from my Higher Power, be sincere, be forgiving, be courageous, ask for support from my sponsor and group</i>	<i>Example: honesty, be understanding, patient, loving, caring, pray, go to ACA meetings, share my experience, strength and hope</i>

Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Nine

- Are there any questions about what we just read?
- We will now have our 15 minutes of sharing time with 3 minute shares.
- We will break up into small groups. Count off as needed. (if needed)
- I will let you know when the 15 minutes is over.
- Shares need to be kept to 3 minutes, please be considerate of others.
- Please share on what we just read or what is on your heart. If you feel comfortable you may share your worksheet(s).
- Please be considerate and give everyone time to share.
- We do not cross talk. Crosstalk means interrupting, referring to, commenting on, or using the content of what another person has said during the meeting.
- Just a reminder what is said at this meeting stays at this meeting.
- Please be respectful of our confidentiality.

- In accordance with the 7th tradition, which states that each group will be self-supporting, we will pass a basket for donations.
- The 7th Tradition goes towards the use of this room, WSO, Intergroup and any other expenses we may have.
- Who would like to be a sharing partner?
- Thank you for participating in our third week of Ready Set GO!!
- Next week we will introduce Steps 10, 11 and 12.
- Who would to be the leader for Week 4?
- Please read the readings on the day of our next meeting.
- Will you please join me for our closing prayer, Gathered Together?

Gathered Together

Higher Power, gathered together we find great peace and serenity.

We seek hope to become whole as we were created to be.

We find strength to deal with life as we grow in our program.

We trust that as we find courage we will feel free and secure.

We are grateful to have the support of our group who understands us.

We believe that Your Presence in our life will give us all that we need.

We close our meeting with a feeling of belonging and being loved.

Keep coming back!

It works if you work it!

And you are worth it!

Ready Set GO!! Week 4

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Who would like to be the leader for this week of Ready Set GO!!?

- Hi, my name is _____, I am an adult child.
- Welcome to week four of a Ready Set GO!! Meeting introducing Steps 10, 11 and 12.
- Will all who care to please join me in the Serenity Prayer?
- God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.
- Let's go around and introduce ourselves. I'll start.
 - Ready Set GO!! are closed ACA introductory meetings. We meet to introduce our ACA 12 Steps and ACA program in a structured four week time frame. We recognize all our 12 Traditions for safety within the group.
 - Ready Set GO!! Is an introduction for ACA newcomers to become acquainted with the ACA Twelve Steps and get clarity and an understanding of the ACA Program. Ready Set GO!! introduces the experienced member to a renewal of their commitment to working their program through the ACA 12 Steps. Ready Set GO!! prepares members for when they will feel ready to go to the ACA 12 Step Workbook. Feel free to leave your fears and anxieties behind you as you experience these introductory meetings.
 - The material is taken from our Big Red Book, the ACA 12 Step Workbook, and Strengthening My Recovery, the ACA meditation book. It requires those in attendance to listen to the material with an open mind and an open heart and in good faith with a desire to learn about ACA recovery and emotional sobriety.
 - Our objective is simple: to introduce members to the ACA program and introduce the ACA 12 Steps by bringing clarity and awareness to the realization that the ACA 12 Steps offer opportunities for solutions.

- Each step will contain a worksheet that may bring more clarity and understanding of each Step. We will set aside a few minutes to fill in the worksheet and to answer any questions. Appendix B will provide a complete version of the worksheets for extra copies. There is no right or wrong way to do the worksheets. They can be done over time as we grow.

- Choosing a sharing partner from this group is suggested for support for the four weeks. Sharing the worksheets with a sharing partner, sponsor, fellow traveler, or your group is recommended, when you feel comfortable. This experience with a sharing partner can give the adult child insight to choosing a sponsor.

- Sponsors may be inclined to introduce Ready Set GO!! to their sponsees to begin their work together in ACA perhaps setting a flexible time frame to accommodate their needs.

- In each of the four weeks we encourage you to prepare for these meetings by reading The Laundry List Traits, The Problem, The Solution, ACA 12 Steps, ACA 12 Traditions, and The Promises in Part One before attending each Ready Set GO!! introductory meeting.

- As we begin, we remind ourselves to have an open mind and an open heart. Be gentle with yourself as you go through this experience of Ready Set GO!!. This brief encounter with the 12 Steps may prepare you to do the ACA 12 Steps Workbook when you choose to do it. Remember Ready Set GO!! is an introduction to ACA.

- Be in peace and let fear and anxiety leave you for this journey.

- In Step Ten having now begun the process of recovery, we will learn how to make the Steps a part of our daily lives. We will continue to take personal inventory, learning more about ourselves as we grow.

- I will read from Strengthening My Recovery related to Step Ten: “On this day I will see that when I no longer resist change, happiness and serenity will follow.” p. 151
- Please do not rush through the readings so we can fully absorb the material.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 10?

- **Step Ten**
- **Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.**
- ***Spiritual Principles: Honesty and Discernment***

Step Ten is where we continue to inventory our behavior and thinking. With this Step we continue to let go of control and expose our denial about the effects of being raised in a dysfunctional home. We learn to take a balanced view of our behavior, avoiding the tendency to take too much responsibility for the actions of others. At the same time, we also curb our tendency to blame others when we are obviously wrong, yet are too afraid or ashamed to admit it. In these cases, we keep it simple. There is no need for long analysis of our behavior. We know what the issues are for us. We make an amends with briefness in mind but with a sincere desire to change. Keeping it simple is the best course in some matters. Other amends might require background information about our past and a longer explanation. We will discern those situations as they arise.¹¹⁹

Step Ten helps us apply what we are learning in meetings and to gauge our daily progress. In Step Ten, we are making a statement to hang onto the hard-won changes we are employing in our lives. We are living with more honesty and affirmation of ourselves. We realize we don't have to act perfect or flawless to be loved or accepted. We can make errors and laugh at ourselves without feeling shame. We are less fearful of people and their opinions of us.¹²⁰

Step Ten helps us polish the spiritual principles we are learning and using in our daily lives. To remain spiritually fit, we must continue to attend meetings, share our feelings, and help others. By helping others on their path of recovery, we help ourselves and learn to break our isolation. We get out of ourselves and contribute to the well-being of our ACA support group. With Step Ten, our personal and spiritual lives improve gradually.¹²¹

Step Ten calls us to inventory our use of the ACA program to improve our marriages, jobs, and choices. We must practice the ACA program in the home and in our jobs if we are to be true to ourselves. The home or office is not an easy place to practice the principles of ACA, but we must. We do not preach about ACA or invade boundaries with our program. Yet, we stand ready to apply the principles of honesty, humility, and forgiveness outside ACA meetings as well as inside the meetings. We also ask for what we need and keep our word. This is not easy, but neither was living with our addictiveness. It took effort to support addictive choices. Practicing spiritual principles and inventorying our lives takes effort as well, but this is the labor of self-love.¹²²

A daily or weekly inventory is different than the hypervigilance we have practiced before recovery. In our Step Ten inventory we judge ourselves less harshly because we know we are human and will make mistakes. We know we can talk about our feelings and our missteps without being judged when we share in ACA meetings. We have shaken hands with our critical inner parent. We are beginning to listen to the actual parent, whom many of us choose to call God.¹²³

Step Ten is where we can continue to integrate any left over character defects or survival skills into our emerging identity. As we learned in Step Seven, there will be residual defects and survival traits that won't recede easily. This does not mean we have failed in previous Steps. Step Ten is where we can acknowledge and embrace these lingering but less useful traits. We use humility and consistent effort to integrate these aspects of our personality.¹²⁴

- Following is the Step 10 Guide with 5 exercises for you to take daily.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.
- While they are being read please feel free to fill them in.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of parts of the different exercises and then pass. Who will begin reading the Personal Inventory?

STEP TEN GUIDE

Page 257-258, Para. 3

Personal Inventory

Ask yourself these questions daily.

1. Am I isolating and not talking about what is really going on with me?
2. Did I view anyone as an authority figure today and feel frightened or rebellious?
3. Did I dissociate, fantasize, or become involved in self-harm today?
4. Am I keeping secrets and feeling unique? Am I talking about my feelings?
5. Am I being honest in my relationships or am I seeking approval over honesty?
6. Am I acting “perfect” and obsessing over making mistakes?
7. Do I overreact or isolate from others when I perceive that I have been criticized?
8. Am I attending ACA meetings to nurture myself and to give back what was given to me?
9. Have I acted helpful recently to manipulate others?
10. Am I secretly angry at someone, but I am avoiding talking about it?
11. Have I listened to my Inner Child or True Self today?
12. Did I judge myself or someone else without mercy today?
13. Am I listening to the Critical Parent or Loving Parent?
14. Am I remembering that I can ask for help today and that I can call someone?

Choice Continuum Exercise

Pages 258-259

Each day circle where you think you are in having real choice in your life.
Continue throughout the day because we can change our level
of control at any time.

Date _____

I feel _____ when I _____ because _____.

Date: _____

DENIAL

AM ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

PM ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

SOME CHOICE

AM ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

PM ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

GREATER CHOICE

AM ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

PM ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

DISCERNMENT

AM ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

PM ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

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One Day At A Time Exercise

Page 259

Step Ten reminds the recovering adult child
to live in the moment
to enjoy life's gifts and
to feel connected to life.

Date _____

I feel _____ when I _____ because _____.

**✓ Check the tools of recovery you
are using to help you live in the moment.**

- Attending ACA Meetings regularly
- Attending Ready Set GO!! Meetings
- Working the Twelve Steps
- Getting a Sponsor
- Associating with recovering adult children
- Sponsoring new members
- Getting involved in service work
- Volunteer to share our recovery at
prisons or the treatment setting
- Answer the Intergroup helpline
- Seek to become a trusted servant

Feelings and Journaling Exercise

Pages 260-261

Complete a sentence each day or every other day to become comfortable with talking about your feelings:

Date _____
I feel _____ when I _____ because

loved	joy	ashamed	humorous	irritated
angry	embarrassed	trusted	betrayed	pleased
satisfied	ambivalent	hopeful	inspired	loving
frustrated	disappointed	grief	accepted	excited
grateful	confident	humiliated	guilty	serene
rested	shame	abandoned	pleasure	safe
tenacious	thoughtful	playful	fascinated	enthralled

Praise Exercise

These assets will help balance positive and spiritual qualities while looking at Step Four. BRB p. 188

Sit quietly and circle at least 10 assets:	
strong	humorous
sensitive	willing
intelligent	compassionate
courteous	talented
honest	organized
spontaneous	creative
loving	a listener
spiritual	trustworthy
tenacious	judicious
accepting	modest
prompt	kind
hard working	a friend
An ACA member	

Repeat, I am _____.

For each circled asset.

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Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Ten.

- Are there any questions about what we just read?
- We will now have our 15 minutes of sharing time with 3 minute shares.
- We will break up into small groups. Count off as needed. (if needed)
- I will let you know when the 15 minutes is over.
- Shares need to be kept to 3 minutes, please be considerate of others.
- Please share on what we just read or what is on your heart. If you feel comfortable you may share your worksheets.
- Please be considerate and give everyone time to share.
- We do not cross talk. Crosstalk means interrupting, referring to, commenting on, or using the content of what another person has said during the meeting.
- Just a reminder what is said at this meeting stays at this meeting.
- Please be respectful of our confidentiality.

— — — Upon return of small groups — — —

- Welcome back.
- In Step Eleven we will seek to improve our contact with our Higher Power through prayer and meditation. We seek to learn God’s will for us, and we ask for the power to carry that out.
- I will read from Strengthening My Recovery related to Step Eleven: “On this day I live in the moment by taking care of both my mind and my body. I breathe, move and ask my Higher Power to be with me.” p. 101
- Please do not rush through the readings so we can fully absorb the material.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 11?

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- **Step Eleven**
- **Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of God’s will for us and the power to carry that out.**
- ***Spiritual Principles. Seeking and Listening***

Step Eleven is where we travel often to find greater levels of maturity through prayer and meditation. Through meditation, we begin to visualize emotional sobriety. We find out what ACA recovery looks like. We begin to see that recovery is a noticeable freedom from the damaging affects of The Laundry List Traits. We realize our Step work has brought some measure of healing from the trauma and neglect of our childhood. We intuitively rely on the Steps and ACA meetings to face every situation in our lives. We rely upon God as we understand God for sure footing. With emotional sobriety, reparenting ourselves becomes a reality in our lives. We love ourselves. The proof of emotional sobriety can be found in our relationships with others and with God, as we understand God.¹²⁵

With meditative techniques, we let go of racing thoughts. We learn to be in the moment and to be present in our bodies. We learn that our thoughts can end.¹²⁶

We can let troublesome thoughts die a natural death in meditation.¹²⁷

In Step Eleven, we take time out of the day to focus on our spiritual path. We connect with God through our True Self when we find stillness and listen for God's footstep. Our True Self knows God's call. The True Self knows the path that our Higher Power takes to the heart. It is the path of love.¹²⁸

Our primary founder, Tony A., said "The adult child personality is a personality which doubts God or cannot believe the unseen, but which seeks God who is unseen." We cannot stop ourselves from seeking contact with a Higher Power. It is part of being an adult child, We must accept this great fact. We are called to God and cannot resist. Acting distracted or indifferent no longer works. The True Parent calls.¹²⁹

Whatever meditative style we choose, the goal is to seek God's will and the power to carry that out. With continued meditation, we return to our everyday activities, feeling more emotionally sober. We feel more energy to get involved in life and to contribute in making a better world. By traveling inward in meditation, we find strength to go farther outward than we could have imagined.¹³⁰

Prayer and meditation will take us further. We pray to put into action the

principles and concepts we are finding in ACA. We pray for strength and power to work the ACA program and to stay focused. We pray for God to take out what blocks us from accepting ourselves. We pray to connect with our Inner Child.¹³¹

The simple prayer is an example of seeking and listening, which is the heart of ACA's Eleventh Step. Many ACA members describe prayer as seeking God's guidance and meditation as listening for it. We pray and listen in Step Eleven.¹³²

With prayer and meditation we find our true inner power. This is the inner strength that we have always had but used limitedly. God has been holding onto it until we were ready to claim it in Step Eleven. This is the power which changes our life and our course of thinking and behaving. This is the power which keeps us going when we lapse into judging ourselves or feel discouraged about making progress in ACA. This is the power that we find when we ask humbly to be used for the greater good of the world.¹³³

We feel more alive than ever before with Step Eleven. We are more imaginative and hopeful. A return to prayer and creativity are two of the gifts of Step Eleven in addition to making conscious contact with God within.¹³⁴

Prayer¹³⁵

'God,

When I look let me truly see.

When I listen let me truly hear."

- I will read the Step 11 Worksheet, Focusing Daily on our Spiritual Path.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.
- You will have 3 minutes to fill it in to the best of your ability.
- Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner for support if needed.

Step 11 Worksheet

Focusing Daily on our Spiritual Path

Seeking God's Will	Listening for God's Will

Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Eleven.

- In Step Twelve, having experienced a spiritual awakening, we learn to practice these principles in all our affairs and to carry the message to those who still suffer. If we wish to keep what we have gained, we must learn to give it away, wherever and whenever we can. We must get out of ourselves. We insist on enjoying life and being a part of life.
- I will read from Strengthening My Recovery related to Step Twelve: "On this day I give service to the ACA fellowship from love, realizing that I am supporting my own progress when I help make another member's progress possible." p.144
- Please do not rush through the readings so we can fully absorb the material.
- We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. Who will begin reading Step 12?

• **Step Twelve**

- **Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**
- ***Spiritual Principles: Love and Self-love***

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In Step Twelve we claim our program of recovery for ourselves by putting into practice the spiritual principles we have used and continue to use to reparent ourselves. The principles include surrender, hope, honesty, self-forgiveness, humility, and many more from the Twelve Steps.¹³⁶

(Additional principles are: powerlessness, open-mindedness, clarity, willingness, acceptance, courage, trust, forgiveness, discernment, seeking, listening, love and self-love).

The Twelfth Step is our stage where we become actors instead of reactors without solutions. Acting from a foundation of self-love and respect, we offer our spiritual solutions to adult children seeking a better way of life. We also help ourselves.¹³⁷

One of the results of a spiritual awakening involves the understanding that God is real. With a spiritual awakening, we move from theories about God to the belief that a Higher Power is accessible and hears our prayers. We know that a loving God or a Spirit of the Universe exists. We have come to believe that God, as we understand God, is the Actual Parent.¹³⁸

With a spiritual experience, we usually realize that we are transformed in some manner. We know something has changed inside of us even though we do not yet fully understand it. For some of us, our spiritual focus seems sharper. We know a peace that we could not imagine previously. We can still have moments of being affected by life, but these moments seem milder and are handled more quickly. We know there is something greater than ourselves at work in the universe. We let go and let God work in these matters.¹³⁹

A spiritual awakening simplifies our lives. We intuitively know what we need and what we can live without. We are no longer reacting to people, places, and things. We live and let live.¹⁴⁰

Spiritually awake adult children understand the spiritual axiom which states: “We must give away what we have to keep it.” This is one of the most selfless acts of love we can offer a confused world; however, we must love ourselves first to have something to give away. Self-love is a result of working the Twelve Steps, being vulnerable, asking for help, and being aware of our

bodies through meditation and proper breathing. We love ourselves when we find our pain. We sit with it without acting out on drugs or some other compulsive activity. We go after our stored grief and greet it and feel it. We find our True Selves and sit beside the Divine Light.¹⁴¹

Meanwhile, those who are spiritually awake accept Twelve Step work with an attitude of service rather than sacrifice. By the time we reach this Step, we know the difference between being a rescuer and giving service with love.¹⁴²

While much of ACA’s program involves the inward journey, Step Twelve reminds us to journey outward as well. We carry the message to other adult children in our meetings, on the telephone, and through service work. We get out of ourselves by sponsoring others, giving rides to meetings, and by getting involved at an ACA event or fund raiser. There are many opportunities if we only look. Most of this activity falls under the title of Twelve Step work, and it means that we are answering the call to carry the message to others.¹⁴³

- I will read the Step 12 Worksheet, Carrying the Message to Those Who Still Suffer.
- You will have 3 minutes to fill it in to the best of your ability.
- Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner for support if needed.
- Blank worksheets are in Appendix B to make copies as needed.

Step 12 Worksheet

Carrying the Message to Those Who Still Suffer

This introduction to the ACA 12 Steps introduced you to spiritual principles you may have never heard of. This chart indicates where you stand with each spiritual principle. Check how you feel about each spiritual principle.

♥ means you have gained some understanding of this principal,

R means you are **ready** to try to use this principal.

S means you will **set** this principal into all of your affairs.

G means you are **going** to share what you have been given with those who still suffer.

Spiritual Principals	♥	R	S	G
Surrender				
Hope				
Honesty				
Self-forgiveness				
Humility				
Powerlessness				
Open-mindedness				
Clarity				
Willingness				
Acceptance				
Courage				
Trust				
Forgiveness				
Discernment				
Seeking				
Listening				
Love				
Self-love				

Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Twelve.

- Are there any questions about what we just read?
- We will now have our 15 minutes of sharing time with 3 minute shares.
- We will break up into small groups. Count off as needed. (if needed)
- I will let you know when the 15 minutes is over.
- Shares need to be kept to 3 minutes, please be considerate of others.
- Please share on what we just read or what is on your heart. If you feel comfortable you may share your worksheets.
- Please be considerate and give everyone time to share.
- We do not cross talk. Crosstalk means interrupting, referring to, commenting on, or using the content of what another person has said during the meeting.
- Just a reminder what is said at this meeting stays at this meeting.
- Please be respectful of our confidentiality.

— — — Upon return of small groups — — —

- Welcome back. It is time to close our meeting and wrap up our 4 week introductory Ready Set GO!! meetings.
- Thank you for participating in our fourth and final week of Ready Set GO!!
- Thank you to those who volunteered to be a sharing partner.
- It is recommended that you lead or participate in Ready Set GO!! Introductory meetings at least once a year to refresh your ACA program.
- In accordance with the 7th tradition, which states that each group will be self-supporting, we will pass a basket for donations.
- The 7th Tradition goes towards the use of this room, WSO, Intergroup and any other expenses we may have.
- Remember we keep what we have been given when we give it away. Please take on the opportunity to do service by leading Ready Set GO!! Introductory Meetings.

- Thank you to all the authors of our ACA Big Red Book, the ACA 12 Steps Workbook and our ACA Meditation Book Stenghtening My Recovery.
- By the grace of God may we humbly move onto working the 12 Steps of ACA in the ACA 12 Steps Workbook when we are **Ready**, and we feel **Set to GO!!** forward.

TO BE CONTINUED
FOR THE REST
OUR LIVES,
PEACE

Below is a link of a video to help you view and listen to
a summary of Ready Set GO!! in your quiet time.

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/eq7np5kz7vg1s58/
Ready%20Set%20GO%21%21%20Version%202%20Video%206%3A28%3
A18.m4v?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/eq7np5kz7vg1s58/Ready%20Set%20GO%21%21%20Version%202%20Video%206%3A28%3A18.m4v?dl=0)

or email your rquest for the link at acatoni5617@comcast.net

Updated 7/5/2018

- Will you please join me for our Closing Prayer, Gathered Together?

Gathered Together

Higher Power, gathered together we find great peace and serenity.

We seek hope to become whole as we were created to be.

We find strength to deal with life as we grow in our program.

We trust that as we find courage we will feel free and secure.

We are grateful to have the support of our group who understands us.

We believe that Your Presence in our life will give us all that we need.

We close our meeting with a feeling of belonging and being loved.

Keep coming back!

It works if you work it!

And you are worth it!

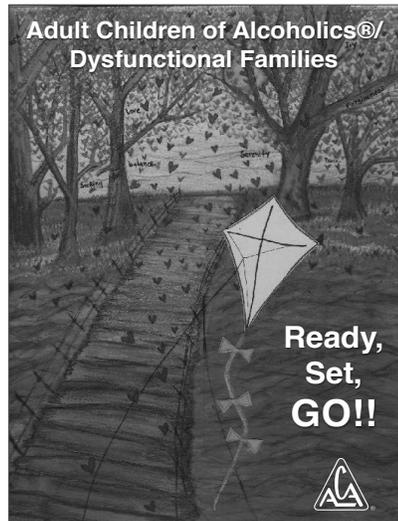
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Part 3

The Appendices



ACA Twelve Steps Stages

BRB p.280

Steps One through Three as **“Giving Up”**
Steps Four and Five as **“Fessing Up”**
Steps Six through Nine as **“Cleaning Up”**
Steps Ten through Twelve as **“Stepping Up”**

Inner Child Meditation

BRB p. 330

Higher Power. Help me to be willing to recognize the Loving Parent inside of me. Help me integrate my Inner Child more actively into my daily life so that I remain awake spiritually. Grant me the courage to change the things I can. Grant me the wisdom of my Inner Child.

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ACA Definitions

Abandonment	A subjective emotional state in which people feel undesired, left behind, insecure, or discarded. People experiencing emotional abandonment may feel at a loss, cut off from a crucial source of sustenance that has been withdrawn either suddenly or through a process of erosion.
Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Abuse - Criminal sexual activity, especially that involving a victim below the age of sexual consent or incapable of sexual consent. • Physical Abuse - Is an act of another party involving contact intended to cause feelings of physical pain, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm. • Emotional Abuse - The debasement of a person's feelings that causes the individual to perceive himself or herself as inept, not cared for, and worthless.
Acceptance	with help and acceptance we recognize the false identity we had to develop to survive family dysfunction.
Addiction	In ACA we view our compulsive thinking and dependency as a spiritual dilemma rather than a mental illness.
Amends	taking responsibility for our actions and changing our behavior.
Blame	to hold responsible, accuse, the act of finding fault; From living with shaming and blaming parents, adult children doubt and blame themselves and others.
Boundaries	something as a line or mark that forms an outer limit, an edge, or an extension; there are different types of boundaries, but their purposes are to allow us to stay respected and free of harm.

Clarity	to make or become clear, understandable, clarity helps us decipher the contradictory messages of our childhood.
Control	to have power or authority to direct or manage; control effects our choices and our thinking. It effects our interpersonal relationships and our relationship with a higher power. As children growing up in shame we have fought hard for control whether it was internal or external.
Courage	The choice and willingness to confront agony, pain, danger, uncertainty or intimidation. Moral courage is the ability to act rightly in the face of popular opposition, shame, scandal, discouragement, or personal loss.
Critical parent	the hypercritical and judgmental voice that frequently finds fault in our thoughts and actions. This include the frequent blaming ourselves and others.
Denial	Breaking through the wall of dealing with our pain and suffering that we tried to ignore for many years.
Discernment	keenness of judgment and insight. Through discernment we know who we are. We trust ourselves at last. This is the breath of God's guidance.
False self	the self we became to survive our dysfunctional families.
Fear	A feeling of anxiety concerning the outcome of something or the safety and well-being of someone: A distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid.

Forgiveness	the act of pardoning an offender. Forgiveness does not mean that we are forgetting or minimizing our offender's behavior.
Honesty	acting honorably, truthfully or fair; we must be honest about our actions and motives. Honesty and clarity of thought comes from seeking a higher power and attending ACA meetings.
Hope	an optimistic state of mind. In ACA we develop an expectation that things will work out, trusting oneself and others.
Humility	an appreciation of oneself, one's talents, skills, and virtues. Through humility we come to know our inner child.
Inner child	the original person, being, or force which we truly are. Some ACA members call this the true self.
Inventory	a list and evaluation of family systems in addition to our own behavior.
Listening	hearing and paying attention to Adult Children, ourselves, and our Higher Power.
Loving Parent	the inner parent we can develop from the part of us that took action to care for ourselves as children and which can be awakened in recovery.
Open-mindedness	receptiveness to new ideas. Relates to the way in which people approach the views and knowledge of others,
Perfectionism	the quality of demanding an impossible level of performance; perfectionism in dysfunctional homes fuels our control and our attempts to control people, places, and things.

Powerlessness	lack of ability or capability to do something to produce a certain effect; adult children view abuse and inappropriate behavior as normal. We are reactors who feel powerless to change our situations.
Recovery	is the process of reclaiming the true self and accepting yourself for who you are no longer waiting for others to define you or approve of you. Through recovery you come out of isolation and connect to others beginning by building relationships in ACA.
Respect	to have or show high regard, esteem, and honor; through learning to respect ourselves we learn to respect others.
Seeking	search for, try to find, look for, be on the lookout for, be after, hunt for, be in quest of.
Self-forgiveness	pardon, absolution, exoneration, remission, dispensation, indulgence, clemency, mercy; reprieve, amnesty; may be required in situations where the individual hurt themselves or in situations where they hurt others
Self-Love	regard for one's own well-being and happiness
Shame	Shame tends to make you feel isolated, inferior and unwanted. When shame is intense the adult child's vision is distorted and perceptions change. Shame is the deep sense that our souls are inherently flawed. BRB p. 10 A person, action, or situation that brings a loss of respect or honor.
Solution	a means of solving a problem or dealing with a difficult situation.

Spirituality	seeking a meaningful connection with something bigger than yourself. It is the way you find meaning, hope, comfort and inner peace in your life and become more human.
Sponsorship	backing, supporting and aiding someone.
Surrender	relinquish possession or control over, give up or agree to forgo to the power or possession of another. We surrender to our inability to change the past and our powerlessness to control the future. We surrender the notion that we can reason out a solution alone or avoid discomfort.
Survival Traits	also known as The Laundry List. ACA experience shows that survival traits continue to effect the adult in problematic ways.
Twelve Step Program	set of guiding principles, outlining a course of action for recovery from addiction, compulsion, other behavioral problems and unhealthy dependence on others.
Trust	a confidence or belief in the strength, ability, or honesty in a person or thing; as children we learned the rule “don’t trust’. In ACA, we overcome that rule and learn to trust ourselves and others.
Unmanageability	capable of being controlled or directed; desire to control others and ourselves while having a sense that we are not capable of being effective.
Willingness	power that the mind has to make choices and decisions to select acts to carry them out; we make a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of Higher Power as we understand our Higher Power.

FAMILY MEMBER LABELS WORKSHEET

Think about your experiences or what you have heard about relatives in connection with addiction, religion, relationship, food, sex, work, etc. The labels for your family members can include one or a combination of labels.

AS I READ

CHECK THOSE THAT APPLY TO ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY

Alcoholic
Used alcohol/drugs
Worked a lot (workaholic)
Religious
Worried a lot (neurotic)
Perfectionist (high strung)
Enabler
Chronically ill, hypochondriac
Emotionally ill
People-pleaser
Martyr
Obese sibling/relative
Sickly child, too sensitive
Loner
Thief, bogus check writer, inmate
Sexually aggressive, not safe
Grabbed or wrestled inappropriately
Pill popper (always taking something)
Ladies man, player, gigolo, skirt chaser
Harsh, always critical, verbally abusive
Great cook (always thought of herself last)
Undependable, does not follow through
Argumentative (will not be quiet, keeps arguments going)
Violent, slapped other, pinched, threatened, glorified fighting
Always had her face in a mirror (thought she was better than others)
Heavy debt (always borrowing money) or big spender (flashy clothes)

Step 1 Worksheet

Powerlessness, Unmanageability, Surrender Process

Effects of Powerlessness <i>Examples: denial, shame, hopeless, lost, stuck, frustrated, confused, worthless</i>	Situations of Unmanageability <i>Examples: relationships, parenting, working, money, organizing</i>	Gain Surrender By <i>Examples: Willing to attend ACA meetings, study ACA 12 steps, get a sponsor, consider a therapist</i>

Step 2 Worksheet

Seeking A Higher Power

Childhood Beliefs of a Higher Power	Adult Beliefs of a Higher Power	Ways to Seek a Higher Power

Step 3 Worksheet

Understanding our Higher Power of Our Choice

What I want my Higher Power to be	How do I become willing to trust my Higher Power?	Things to turn over to my Higher Power
<i>(a loving relationship, nurturing, caring, supportive, kind, always present)</i>	<i>(By totally surrendering my will, by facing my denial, forsake my need to control, learn how to pray, learn to ask for help)</i>	<i>(The Laundry List Traits, character defects, fears and anxieties)</i>

Ready Set GO!!'s "Blameless" 4th Step Inventory

L e a d e r

<p>Step Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is Ready Set GO!!'s introduction to the inventory process offering you awareness of your experience, strength and hope. (Refer to the BRB pages 166-189) • First read across the columns to do a Quick Check of Dysfunctional Problems that apply to you. Read Definitions as needed. • Go back to your check marks and complete Exercise 1 insert people who have harmed you. • Go back to your check marks and complete Exercise 2 insert people who you have harmed. • Take your time, leaving your fears and anxieties behind you. • You will have 10 minutes to take a Quick Check of the Dysfunctional Problems that apply to you. Time allowing begin to fill in Exercise 1 and 2. • Read Definitions for Healing Solutions that show us how to Seek Balance for Positive Results. • Take the Praise Exercise balancing positive and spiritual qualities. • ✓ Quick Check Marks will be discussed in detail with your sharing partner later. • Thoroughly complete the worksheets at home with the support of your sharing partner if needed.

Quick Check		Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Seek Balance for Positive Results	
Dysfunctional Problems	Definitions	People who have harmed you	People who you have harmed	Healing Solutions	Definitions
<p>✓</p> <p>Laundry Lists Traits</p>	<p>A list of characteristics we seem to have in common due to being brought up in an alcoholic and/or dysfunctional family. Some of these are afraid of people and authority, addictive lives, stuff our feelings, terrified of abandonment, approval seekers., self-sacrificial, addicted to excitement, confuse love and pity, judge ourselves harshly, reactors rather than actors, par-alcoholics(co-depedents).</p>			<p>Laundry List Workbook</p>	<p>Take a look at the different perceptions that are a part of these traits and learn how to integrate them or let go of them. With this action we will begin to find emotional sobriety.</p>
<p>Family Secrets</p>	<p>These are secrets, inconsistencies, and wrongs that are contrary to the family image. <small>workbook p.82</small></p>			<p>Overcome Denial</p>	<p>Breaking through the wall of dealing with our pain and suffering that we tried to ignore for many years.</p>
<p>Shame</p>	<p>Shame tends to make you feel isolated, inferior and unwanted. When shame is intense the adult child's vision is distorted and perceptions change. Shame is the deep sense that our souls are inherently flawed. <small>BRB.p. 10</small></p>			<p>Self Love</p>	<p>Start to let ourselves appreciate the true self that God meant us to be, the innocent, pure, thoughtful, loving child of God.</p>

Quick Check		Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Seek Balance for Positive Results
Dysfunctional Problems	Definitions	People who have harmed you	People who you have harmed	Definitions
Abandonment	A subjective emotional state in which people feel undesired, left behind, insecure, or discarded. People experiencing emotional abandonment may feel at a loss, cut off from a crucial source of sustenance that has been withdrawn either suddenly or through a process of erosion.			The part of ourselves that is free from the Critical Parent. The Loving Parent can give us what we need now. When we were children our needs were not met by our parents. We learn how to be a Loving Parent following the principles of the steps.
Fear	A feeling of anxiety concerning the outcome of something or the safety and well-being of someone: A distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid.			Loving Parent Gentleness
				Being kind, caring, thoughtful of others and ourselves. The quality of being tender, or mild-mannered.

Quick Check		Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Seek Balance for Positive Results	
Dysfunctional Problems	Definitions	People who have harmed you	People who you have harmed	Healing Solutions	Definitions
Stored Anger (Resentments)	Strong displeasure; anger; hostility provoked by a wrong experienced.			Forgiveness	The intentional and voluntary process by which a victim undergoes a change in feelings and attitude regarding an offense, lets go of negative emotions such as vengefulness, with an increased ability to wish the offender well. Forgiveness is different from condoning, excusing, forgetting, pardoning, and reconciliation. In certain contexts, forgiveness is a legal term for absolving or giving up all claims on account of debt, loan, obligation, or other claims.
Dysfunctional Relationships	Relationships that do not perform their appropriate function; that is, they do not emotionally support the participants, foster communication among them, appropriately challenge them, or prepare or fortify them for life in the larger world.			Self Respect	Pride and confidence in oneself; a feeling that one is behaving with honor and dignity.

Quick Check		Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Seek Balance for Positive Results	
Dysfunctional Problems	Definitions	People who have harmed you	People who you have harmed	Healing Solutions	Definitions
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	<p>An anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as survivor guilt, reliving the trauma in dreams, numbness and lack of involvement with reality, or recurrent thoughts and images.</p> <p>These are frozen emotions that the child was not allowed to feel that never go away. This is huge! These emotions stay buried, contributing to limiting beliefs and negative self views. It is not until this pent-up energy is expelled, expressed and processed in the presence of an understanding, safe and validating other that the emotion is released. Every emotion that you've never dealt with is still shut up in your heart. You can see the results in your daily life today. Your actions and reactions can be triggered by these frozen emotions, wreaking havoc on your life until you thaw it out and begin to finally heal.</p>			Contentment	A state of happiness and satisfaction.
Frozen Feelings				Rigorous Honesty	The ability to be totally and completely honest with oneself and sharing that with trusted others.

Quick Check		Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Seek Balance for Positive Results	
Dysfunctional Problems	Definitions	People who have harmed you	People who you have harmed	Healing Solutions	Definitions
Sexual Abuse	<p>✓</p> <p>Criminal sexual activity, especially that involving a victim below the age of sexual consent or incapable of sexual consent.</p>			Courage	The choice and willingness to confront agony, pain, danger, uncertainty or intimidation. Moral courage is the ability to act rightly in the face of popular opposition, shame, scandal, discouragement, or personal loss.
Physical Abuse	Is an act of another party involving contact intended to cause feelings of physical pain, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm.			Loving Kindness	Tenderness and consideration toward others.
Emotional Abuse	The debasement of a person's feelings that causes the individual to perceive himself or herself as inept, not cared for, and worthless.			Trust	Firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something.

Praise Exercise

These assets will help balance positive and spiritual qualities while looking at Step Four. BRB p. 188

Sit quietly and circle at least 10 assets:	
strong	humorous
sensitive	willing
intelligent	compassionate
courteous	talented
honest	organized
spontaneous	creative
loving	a listener
spiritual	trustworthy
tenacious	judicious
accepting	modest
prompt	kind
hard working	a friend
An ACA member	

Repeat, I am _____.

For each circled asset.

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Step 5 Worksheet

Dealing and Balancing with the Losses

Dysfunctional Problems <i>Hurts, abuses, losses</i>	Who harmed me?	What can I learn and how will it help me?
Dysfunctional Problems <i>Hurts, abuses, losses</i>	Who have I harmed?	What can I learn and how will it help me?

Step 6 Check List Worksheet

Check Defects of Character and Laundry List Traits

I am willing to have removed and/or integrated by my Higher Power
To be done over time as I progress.

Defects of Character	
	Mistrust
	Feeling Superior
	Procrastination
	Greed
	Pettiness
	Envy
	Lust
	Perfectionism
	Isolation
	Dishonesty
	Judgmental
	Self Centeredness

Laundry List Traits	
	para alcoholics
	codependency
	reactors rather than actors
	judge ourselves harshly
	stuff our feelings
	afraid of people and authority figures
	confuse love and pity
	addictive lives
	addicted to excitement
	approval seekers
	self-sacrificial
	terrified of abandonment
	frightened by angry people
	live life from the viewpoint of victims

When we are ready, we repeat the **Seventh Step prayer** for **each defect or survival trait** we wish to have removed or integrated.

Seventh Step Prayer - Character Defects

God. I am now ready that you should remove from me all my defects of character, which block me from accepting your divine love and living with true humility toward others. Renew my strength so that I might help myself and others along this path of recovery.

"I humbly ask you to:

"Remove my defect of _____ . Amen."

Select Defects of Character:	
Mistrust	Lust
Feeling Superior	Perfectionism
Procrastination	Isolation
Greed	Dishonesty
Pettiness	Judgmental
Envy	Self Centeredness

Seventh Step Prayer - Laundry List Traits

God. I am now ready that you should integrate my survival traits, which block me from accepting your divine love.

Grant me wholeness.

"I humbly ask you to:

"Integrate my trait of _____ . Amen."

Laundry List Traits survival traits or common behaviors:	
para alcoholics	addicted to excitement
codependency	approval seekers
reactors rather than actors	self-sacrificial
judge ourselves harshly	terrified of abandonment
stuff our feelings	frightened by angry people
afraid of people and authority figures	live life from the viewpoint of victims
confuse love and pity	addicted to excitement
addictive lives	approval seekers

Step 7 Worksheets

#1 and #2

#1 Check Problematic Behaviors that Continue to Affect my Life	
	Abrupt
	Aloof
	Argumentative
	Boisterous
	Blunt
	Cold
	Critical
	Domineering
	Fearful
	Greedy
	Hateful
	Inconsiderate
	Irritable
	Miserable
	Resentful
	Sanctimonious
	Suspicious
	Thoughtless
	Timid
	Troublesome
	Ungrateful
	Unfulfilled
	Vengeful
	Weakness
	Worthless

#2 Check Positive Qualities to Balance/Reparent Myself	
	Admirable
	Agreeable
	Balanced
	Calm
	Capable
	Courageous
	Compassionate
	Dedicated
	Efficient
	Enthusiastic
	Flexible
	Forgiving
	Good natured
	Humble
	Objective
	Open
	Patient
	Profound
	Punctual
	Reliable
	Respectful
	Satisfaction
	Spontaneous
	Tolerant
	Warm

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Step 8 Amends List Worksheet

Person	Relationship	Make Amends For	Behaviors That Will Change

Step 9

Suggested Verbal Amends

In making an amends, we might say:

“I am involved in a program in which I am learning to change my behavior and to live more honestly and openly. Part of the process involves making amends to people I have harmed with my behavior. I am making amends to you for _____(name the behavior, action, or other). I want to make it right. I am not making excuses, but I have harmed people based on my lack of knowledge about living, I am changing my behavior.”

Step 9 Amends Process

Naming what I have done	Making things right	Actions for change
<i>Example: harmed my true self with codependency, drugs, sex, work, gambling, and food, guilt and shame</i>	support <i>Example: be humble, seek help from my Higher Power, be sincere, be forgiving, be courageous, ask for support from my sponsor and group</i>	<i>Example: honesty, be understanding, patient, loving, caring, pray, go to ACA meetings, share my experience, strength and hope</i>

STEP TEN GUIDE

Personal Inventory

Page 257-258

Date _____

1. Am I isolating and not talking about what is really going on with me?
2. Did I view anyone as an authority figure to day and feel frightened or rebellious?
3. Did I dissociate, fantasize, or become involved in self-harm today?
4. Am I keeping secrets and feeling unique? Am I talking about my feelings?
5. Am I being honest in my relationships or am I seeking approval over honesty?
6. Am I acting “perfect” and obsessing over making mistakes?
7. Do I overreact or isolate from others when I perceive that I have been criticized?
8. Am I attending ACA meetings to nurture myself and to give back what was given to me?
9. Have I acted helpful recently to manipulate others?
10. Am I secretly angry at someone, but I am avoiding talking about it?
11. Have I listened to my Inner Child or True Self today?
12. Did I judge myself or someone else without mercy today?
13. Am I listening to the Critical Parent or Loving Parent?
14. Am I remembering that I can ask for help today and that I can call someone?

Date _____ Ask yourself these questions daily.

1. Am I isolating and not talking about what is really going on with me?
2. Did I view anyone as an authority figure to day and feel frightened or rebellious?
3. Did I dissociate, fantasize, or become involved in self-harm today?
4. Am I keeping secrets and feeling unique? Am I talking about my feelings?
5. Am I being honest in my relationships or am I seeking approval over honesty?
6. Am I acting “perfect” and obsessing over making mistakes?
7. Do I overreact or isolate from others when I perceive that I have been criticized?
8. Am I attending ACA meetings to nurture myself and to give back what was given to me?
9. Have I acted helpful recently to manipulate others?
10. Am I secretly angry at someone, but I am avoiding talking about it?
11. Have I listened to my Inner Child or True Self today?
12. Did I judge myself or someone else without mercy today?
13. Am I listening to the Critical Parent or Loving Parent?
14. Am I remembering that I can ask for help today and that I can call someone?

Choice Continuum Exercise

Pages 258-259

Each day circle where you think you are in having real **choice** in your life.
Continue throughout the day because we can change
our level of control at any time.

Date: _____

DENIAL

AM	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫
PM	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫

SOME CHOICE

AM	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫
PM	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫

GREATER CHOICE

AM	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫
PM	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫

DISCERNMENT

AM	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫
PM	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪	⑫

Step Ten reminds the recovering adult child
to live in the moment
to enjoy life's gifts and
to feel connected to life.

**Check the tools of recovery you are
using to help you live in the moment.**

DATE _____

- Attending ACA Meetings regularly
- Attending Ready Set GO!! Meeting
- Working the Twelve Steps
- Getting a Sponsor
- Associating with recovering adult children
- Sponsoring new members
- Getting involved in service work
- Volunteer to share our recovery at prisons
or the treatment setting
- Answer the Intergroup helpline
- Seek to become a trusted servant

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Feelings and Journaling Exercise

Pages 260-261

Complete a sentence each day or every other day to become comfortable with talking about your feelings:

loved	joy	ashamed	humorous	irritated
angry	embarrassed	trusted	betrayed	pleased
satisfied	ambivalent	hopeful	inspired	loving
frustrated	disappointed	grief	accepted	excited
grateful	confident	humiliated	guilty	serene
rested	shame	abandoned	pleasure	safe
tenacious	thoughtful	playful	fascinated	enthralled

Date _____

I feel _____ when I _____ because _____.

Date _____

I feel _____ when I _____ because _____.

Date _____

I feel _____ when I _____ because _____.

Date _____

I feel _____ when I _____ because _____.

Date _____

I feel _____ when I _____ because _____.

Date _____

As we also inventory our mistakes and missteps.
Note what you do right and include those you are unsure of or those you would like to have in your life.

☑ Check to celebrate your good qualities

- humorous, willing, compassionate,
- courteous, loving, spiritual,
- accepting, trustworthy, tenacious,
- a friend, spontaneous, creative,
- a listener, strong, sensitive,
- talented, prompt, an ACA member,
- intelligent, honest, organized,
- judicious, modest, kind,
- hard working.

These assets will help
balance positive and spiritual qualities.

**Sit quietly and fill an asset in an
affirmation repeating:**

I am _____.

Date _____

As we also inventory our mistakes and missteps.
Note what you do right and include those you are unsure of or those you would like to have in your life.

☑ Check to celebrate your good qualities

- humorous, willing, compassionate,
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- talented, prompt, an ACA member,
- intelligent, honest, organized,
- judicious, modest, kind,
- hard working.

These assets will help
balance positive and spiritual qualities.

**Sit quietly and fill an asset in an
affirmation repeating:**

I am _____.

Step 11 Worksheet

Focusing Daily on our Spiritual Path

Seeking God's Will	Listening for God's Will

Step 12 Worksheet

Carrying the Message to Those Who Still Suffer

This introduction to the ACA 12 Steps introduced you to spiritual principles you may have never heard of. This chart indicates where you stand with each spiritual principle. Check how you feel about each spiritual principle.

♥ means you have gained some understanding of this principal,
R means you are **ready** to try to use this principal.
S means you will **set** this principal into all of your affairs.
G means you are **going** to share what you have been given with those who still suffer.

Spiritual Principals	♥	R	S	G
Surrender				
Hope				
Honesty				
Self-forgiveness				
Humility				
Powerlessness				
Open-mindedness				
Clarity				
Willingness				
Acceptance				
Courage				
Trust				
Forgiveness				
Discernment				
Seeking				
Listening				
Love				
Self-love				

Gathered Together

Higher Power, gathered together we find great peace and serenity

We seek hope to become whole as we were created to be.

We find strength to deal with life as we grow in our program.

We trust that as we find courage, we will feel free and secure.

We are grateful to have the support of our group who understands us.

We believe that your presence in our life will give us all that we need.

We close our meeting with a feeling of belonging and being loved.

Keep Coming Back!

It works when you work it!

And you are worth it!

Suggestions for a Closed Ready Set GO!! Introductory Telephone Meetings

- Purchase the Ready Set GO!! Introductory ACA 12 Steps Starter Guide.
- Select a free teleconference provider(with option of screen sharing) can be easily found on the internet thus becoming the Host for the 4 weeks.
- Determine day, time zone for the four weeks of a closed RSG Telephone Meeting.
- Register Closed Telephone Meeting with WSO if you will be doing RSG every few months.
- Create a flyer for your regular meeting, and for your Intergroup's Event Page, and WSO's Event Page, making sure all information is available with the teleconference numbers needed to join the meeting.
- The host will be the leader for the first week.
- It is suggested participants volunteer to be the leader for each week of Ready Set GO!!.
- Go to Part 2 of Ready Set GO!! to follow the format of the face to face meeting.
- As the leader you will want to make sure the callers know how to mute and unmute. This will be repeated throughout the meeting when you need participants to read, share or ask questions.
- Ask participants to volunteer to read a step then pass.
- There are Service Sheets to write who will read, share, be timekeeper, give information to be a Sharing Partner and for the Phone and/or Email Exchange for each week. There are blank Service Sheets for you to print extra copies for weekly use.
- It is suggested that The Laundry List Traits and The Solution be read for the Telephone Meetings.
- Remind participants that Ready Set GO!! meetings do not take the place of their regular meeting.

RSG WEEK #1 Service **Timekeeper_____

Readers	Readings
	The Laundry List - Reading Sheet or BRB p. 587-588
	The Solution Reading Sheet or BRB 590
	Introduction through Characteristics
	Step One
	Step Two
	Step Three

Shares # 1	Shares # 2	Shares # 3
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RSG WEEK #2 Service **Timekeeper_____

Readers	Readings
	The Laundry List - Reading Sheet or BRB p. 587-588
	The Solution Reading Sheet or BRB 590
	Step Four
	Step Five

Shares # 1	Shares # 2	Shares # 3

RSG WEEK #3 Service **Timekeeper_____

Readers	Readings
	The Laundry List - Reading Sheet or BRB p. 587-588
	The Solution Reading Sheet or BRB 590
	Step Six
	Step Seven
	Step Eight
	Step Nine

Shares # 1	Shares # 2	Shares # 3
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RSG WEEK #4 Service **Timekeeper_____

Readers	Readings
	The Laundry List - Reading Sheet or BRB p. 587-588
	The Solution Reading Sheet or BRB 590
	Step Ten
	Step Ten Guide
	Step Eleven
	Step Twelve

Appendix E

Shares # 1	Shares # 2	Shares # 3

RSG One Day

RSG One Day

RSG One Day

RSG One Day

A Suggested Format for ACA 12 Step Workbook Group

Begin at _____
Closing at _____.
Welcome to the ACA 12 Step Workbook Group.
My name is _____ and I am your leader for tonight.
Let's go around the room and introduce ourselves.
The Workbook Group is not easy. We suggest you seek support of a sponsor or co-sponsor, attend regular meetings, and read the additional material from the Big Red Book. This will broaden your understanding and enhance your ability to participate in the Twelve Step process.
One of the first lessons in recovery is know your own limitations and participate only in those activities that support your recovery.
We meet to share our experience, strength and hope as we recover from growing up in an alcoholic and/or dysfunctional home.
Ask if we need a five to ten minute group conscience.
Will you please join me in a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer?
Read the Laundry List, the Solution, the 12 Steps, the 12 Traditions on your own the day of your meeting.
Read the meditation from Strengthening my Recovery.
I will pass around the clipboard with the phone list and a Signup Sheet for chairing the meeting.
Please feel comfortable to do so when you are ready.
It is time for our 7th Tradition.
Tonight we will be sharing on the material on pages (see clipboard). Focus on your written responses, one at a time or summarize, as you feel comfortable.
Crosstalk means interrupting, referring to, or commenting on what another person has said during the meeting. We do not crosstalk because adult children come from family backgrounds where feelings and perceptions were judged as wrong or defective. In ACA, each person may share feelings and perceptions without fear of judgment. We accept what others say because it is true for them. We work toward taking more responsibility in our lives rather than giving advice to others. BRB p564
We will now have our sharing time. Please be considerate of others so we can all have a reasonable time to share and close at _____.
Share a feeling word with a brief comment.
Will someone please read the Inner Child Affirmations?
Will someone please read The Promises? BRB p. 591
What is said at this meeting stays at this meeting.
Thank you for the opportunity to chair this meeting.
Will all who care to please join me in the Lord's Prayer.
Keep coming back. It works if you work it. And you are worth it.

Further discussion needed for Tony A's 12 Steps

ACA cofounder Tony A. published a new version of the Twelve Steps in his 1991 book "The Laundry List: The ACoA Experience." [The Laundry List](#) is a list of 14 traits that capture the personality and thinking of an adult reared in a dysfunctional home. Tony's 1991 steps focus on self-love and self-forgiveness. They are quite different than the traditional Twelve Steps adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous.

Here is an example of Step Three: "We made a decision to practice self-love and to trust in a Higher Power of our understanding." AA's Third Step: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him."

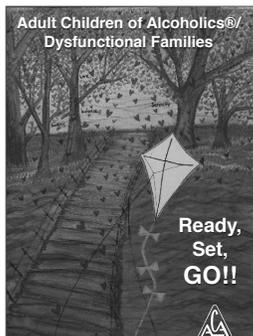
Tony was a concurrent member of Alcoholics Anonymous and Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACoA/ACA). He believed in AA and its proven method for helping the suffering alcoholic; however, Tony began tinkering with rewording the Twelve Steps soon after helping found ACoA in 1978. He refined his version of the Twelve Steps during the next 11 years and published them in 1991. Tony's Steps are not presented here due to copyright reasons.

Meanwhile, the Adult Children of Alcoholics fellowship adopted and approved the AA Steps for fellowship use in 1984. This was seven years before Tony's published his book and his Steps. The AA Steps and Traditions were adopted by the ACoA (ACA) Annual Business Conference of 1984. This is known as the fellowship vote for autonomy for ACoA (ACA). The AA adapted Steps are the fellowship approved Steps for ACoA (ACA).

The AA Steps, as adapted by Adult Children of Alcoholics, incorporate many of Tony's ideas on self-love and self-forgiveness while also retaining the original principles and meaning of the AA Steps.

For example, Step Four incorporates a compelling feature of Tony's Fourth Step which calls for a blameless inventory of the parents. This feature is unheard of in Twelve Step fellowships, which have erected a firewall against looking at anyone else during the inventory process.

Most Twelve Step fellowships believe that you cannot look at parental behavior without falling into blame and self pity. Tony disagreed. Tony believed we internalized our parents' dysfunctional behavior as children. He believed we could not find clarity or peace of mind until we inventoried what had been handed off to us by our parent, grandparents or relatives. When you look at the generational nature of how family dysfunction is passed on from parent to child, Tony was right. We have internalized our parents' behavior and passed it on to our children. However, this is not the end for us. We can take a blameless and fair inventory of our parents balanced with an inventory of ourselves. The ACoA/ACA Steps bring true change and peace of mind.



Continuing Your Journey Toward Recovery After Ready Set GO!!

- Continue to go to my regular ACA meetings.
- Encourage my fellow travelers to experience the introduction meetings of RSG.
- Consider taking RSG many times to strengthen the message of these introductory meetings.
- Consider becoming a leader of Ready Set GO!!.
- Seek courage to be a sharing partner.
- Feel more comfortable knowing that my fears and anxieties have lessened.
- Use Ready Set GO!! as a helpful tool to share with my sponsees.
- When I am ready to take on the ACA 12 Step workbook, I can feel confident that it is possible to take on this challenging course of action with a lot less fear and anxiety.
- Have the courage to give away what I have been so freely given by becoming a sponsor.
- Listen to my inner child who is beginning to help me connect with my Higher Power.
- Seeing more opportunities for me to do service.
- Feeling the healing beginning to be a part of my recovery.
- Realizing that I can keep coming back to renew my recovery.
- Enjoy the connection I have experienced with fellow travelers during these 4 weeks.
- My inner child feels a new sense of love for my Loving Parent and can go on without feeling inadequate, hopeless and lost.

In Gratitude of Ready Set GO!!



Ready Set GO!! seems to offer relief to the Adult Child who is confused, overwhelmed, depressed, miserable and wondering where do I go from here. The Ready Set GO!! Committee was made up of many Adult Children who felt this would be a good way to do service. Their dedication for these 8 years have opened up many new and different encounters with many people from all over the world. This has been an act of love for all of us. Our Higher Power has connected us all with one goal in mind, to help the Adult Child who is still suffering. We hope that Ready Set GO!! will give you the ability to be

HAPPY, JOYOUS AND FREE.

Ready Set GO!!

Developed by:

Dolores W., Toni P., Kathy S., Karen A., Elizabeth C.,
Downers Grove, IL and La Grange, IL ACA Meetings,
and Dave S. created Ready Set GO!! One Day Workshop,
Fitchburg, WI ACA Meetings,
and many more Adult Children for those who are still suffering



Ready Set GO!! Cover
Created By: Kate B.

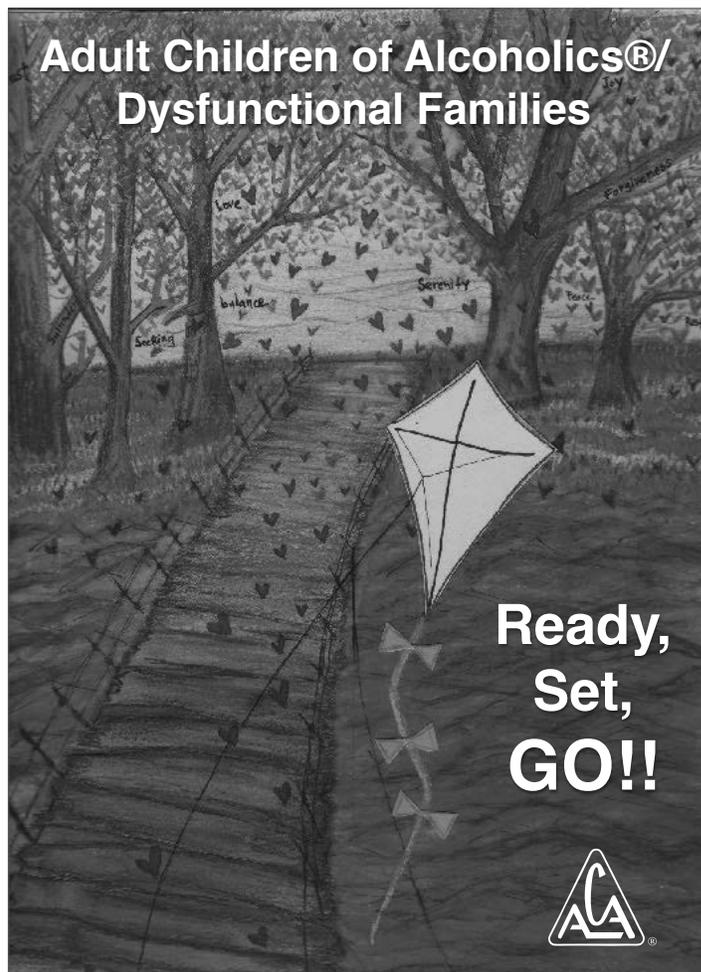
“Awakening My Little One”
was composed by Lynne B.
for The Ready Set GO!! Video

The Ready Set GO!! Video
was Lovingly Created By:
Toni P.

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About the Cover:

The cover depicts the adult child's journey toward healing. Ready Set GO!! is a bridge over troubled waters. As Adult Children we are seeking relief from the wounds and pains of growing up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional family. This led us to the ACA program. Raging waters represent our struggle for survival. The sun represents Our Higher Power a source of energy. The trees and green growth are the beginnings of new life. We find bits and pieces along the path of the bridge finding love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.

Ready Set GO!! Endnotes

¹ Big Red Book, p. 571

² Ibid, p.558

³ Ibid, xxvi

⁴ Ibid, p. 568

⁵ Ibid, p.358

⁶ Ibid, p. 93

⁷ Ibid, p. 81-82

⁸ Ibid, p. 82

⁹ Ibid, p.82

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 387

¹¹ Ibid, p. 387

¹² Ibid, p. 568

¹³ Ibid, p. 569

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 569

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 569

¹⁶ Ibid, p.57-59

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 96

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 96-97

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 97

²⁰ Ibid, p. 97

²¹ Ibid, p. 97

²² Ibid, p. 98

²³ Ibid, p. 99

²⁴ Ibid, p. 99

- 25 Ibid, p. 102
- 26 Ibid, p. 103
- 27 Ibid, p. 104
- 28 Ibid, p. 104
- 29 Ibid, p. 123
- 30 Ibid, p. 124
- 31 Ibid, p. 405
- 32 Ibid, p. 127
- 33 Ibid, p. 128
- 34 Ibid, p. 155
- 35 Ibid, p. 201
- 36 Ibid, p. 125
- 37 Ibid, p. 106
- 38 Ibid, p. 107
- 39 Ibid, p. 137
- 40 Ibid, p. 107
- 41 Ibid, p. 107
- 42 Ibid, p. 135-136
- 43 Ibid, p;. 137
- 44 Ibid, p. 107-108
- 45 Ibid, p. 108
- 46 Ibid, p. 108
- 47 Ibis, p. 142
- 48 Ibid, p. 142

- ⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 143
- ⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 143
- ⁵¹ Ibid, p. 143-144
- ⁵² Ibid, p. 145-146
- ⁵³ Ibid, 146
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 155-156
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 149
- ⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 108
- ⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 109, para. 1
- ⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 109, para. 3
- ⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 109, para. 4
- ⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 109-110, p. 5
- ⁶¹ Ibid, p. 110, para. 2
- ⁶² Ibid, p. 110-111
- ⁶³ Ibid, p. 157, para. 1
- ⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 157, para. 2
- ⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 157-158
- ⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 159, para. 1
- ⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 159
- ⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 188 partial
- ⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 189, para. 2 partial
- ⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 189, para. 3 partial
- ⁷¹ Ibid, p. 195, para. 2
- ⁷² Ibid, p. 195, para. 3

- ⁷³ Ibid, p. 196
- ⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 195-197, para. 3
- ⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 197, para 1
- ⁷⁶ Ibid, 197, para. 5
- ⁷⁷ Ibid, p.198
- ⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 198
- ⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 199
- ⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 206
- ⁸¹ Ibid, p. 209, para. 2
- ⁸² Ibid, p. 209, para. 3
- ⁸³ Ibid, p. 209, para. 4
- ⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 210, para. 2
- ⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 212, para. 2
- ⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 212, para. 3
- ⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 212, para 4
- ⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 213, para. 2
- ⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 214, para. 3
- ⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 214, para. 4
- ⁹¹ Ibid, p. 215, para. 1
- ⁹² Ibid, p. 215, para. 2
- ⁹³ Ibid, p. 219
- ⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 220, para. 2
- ⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 220, para. 3
- ⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 222

- ⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 223, para. 1
- ⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 223, para. 2
- ⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 223, para. 3
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 225
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid, p. 225
- ¹⁰² Ibid, p. 226
- ¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 229-230
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 230
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 231
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid p. 234
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 237, para. 1
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 237, para. 2
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 238-239, para. 3
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 239, para. 1
- ¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 239, para. 3
- ¹¹² Ibid, p. 239-240, para. 4
- ¹¹³ Ibid, p. 240, para. 3
- ¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 241, para 2
- ¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 241, para. 3
- ¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 242
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 242, para. 1
- ¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 242, para. 2
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 251-151, para. 5
- ¹²⁰ Ibid , p. 252, para. 1

- ¹²¹ Ibid, p. 252, para. 3
- ¹²² Ibid, p. 252, para. 4
- ¹²³ Ibid, p. 254
- ¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 256-257, para. 3
- ¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 265-266, para. 1
- ¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 266, para. 1
- ¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 266, para. 1
- ¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 266, para. 2
- ¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 267, para. 3
- ¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 272-273, para. 4
- ¹³¹ Ibid, p. 273-274, para. 3
- ¹³² Ibid, p. 275, para. 1
- ¹³³ Ibid, p. 275, para. 2
- ¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 275, para. 3
- ¹³⁵ Ibid, p. 274
- ¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 282
- ¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 283, para. 1
- ¹³⁸ Ibid, p. 283, para. 2
- ¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 284
- ¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 286
- ¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 288
- ¹⁴² Ibid, p. 289
- ¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 292