

## Welcome to Ready Set GO!!

Ready Set GO!! Meetings are closed ACA meetings for taking the ACA 12 Steps over a 4 week period. We will not be working the Steps. We will be taking the Steps. Ready Set GO!! is for ACA members to become acquainted with the ACA Twelve Steps and to prepare you for when you choose to do the ACA 12 Step Workbook. The recovering and discovering progresses with taking the steps by using a structured format over a four week period. The material is taken from our Big Red Book and our ACA 12 Step Workbook.

Ready Set GO!! is for the newcomer and the old timer. 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.

Interested members can go to [www.westgreatlakesaca.org](http://www.westgreatlakesaca.org) to print out the 101 page pdf of the script and the handouts of the Ready Set GO!! material. For a dated session of four weeks and a flyer go to: Ready Set GO!! for a specific date. Go to: Global ACA News and click: Ready Set GO!! for the same material that will be available for those meetings not posted here. Print this out in a single sheet format and bring this material to all the meetings.

When you have completed Ready Set GO!! we ask that you send your comments and/or your Evaluation Sheets to WSO Literature Committee to help bring Ready Set GO!! closer to being published as an approved piece of literature of ACA.

Please send your comments to: [litstaff@adultchildren.org](mailto:litstaff@adultchildren.org)

Thank you,  
Ready Set GO!! Committee

Sponsored By:  
The West Great Lakes ACA Intergroup  
Thank You, Ready Set GO!! Committee

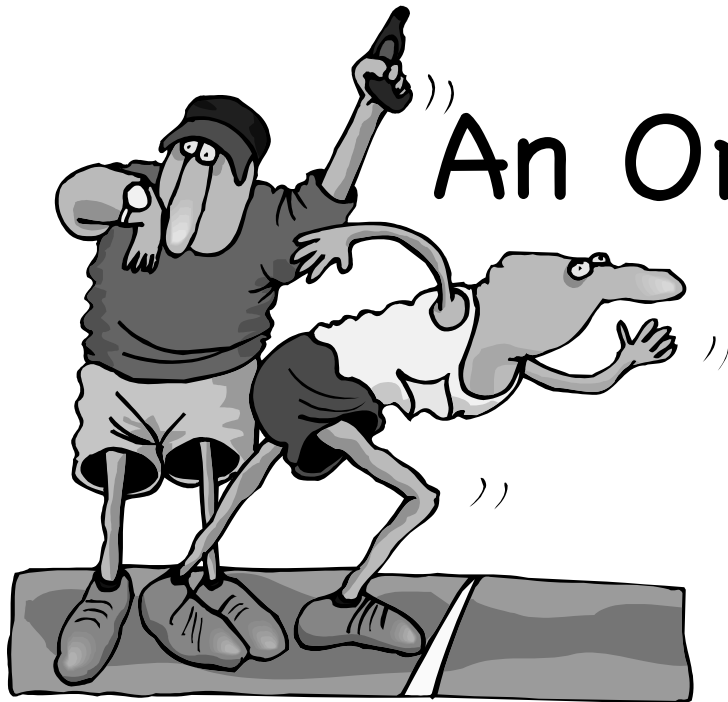
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# ACA/ACOA 12 Steps Ready, Set, GO!!



## An Orientation of the Fundamentals of ACA/ACOA's 12 Steps

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## Welcome to **Ready Set GO!!**

This is an invitation to Ready Set GO!! A 12 Step tool before doing our workbook. We recognize all our 12 Traditions for safety within this group. We will take our 12 steps in 4 weeks.

We have created **Ready Set GO!!** for taking the ACA 12 Steps in 4 one and half hour sessions first before working the ACA 12 Step Workbook. We will not be working the Steps. We will be taking the Steps. In taking the Steps using **Ready Set GO!!**, we hope to “keep it simple” releasing some anxiety and fearfulness going into working our ACA 12 Step Workbook later. The recovering and discovering progresses with taking and then working these Steps together. The material is taken from our Big Red Book and our ACA 12 Step Workbook. Some modified worksheets, and some new worksheets will be introduced to generate practical use in **Ready Set GO!!**.

Sharing partners will be used to maintain a buddy system for those hard to handle situations. The requirements for a sharing partner are: attending ACA meetings regularly, and/or has completed the ACA 12 Step Workbook.

After **Ready Set GO!!** all partners will decide when to commit to completing the Workbook for a weekly meeting for 9 months to a year.

Safety, unity, reassurance, understanding, spirituality and faith in our ACA 12 Step program are the all around goals for **Ready Set GO!!**.

**Ready Set GO!!** is for the newcomer and the old timer. It requires those in attendance to listen to the material with an open mind and an open heart and in good faith.

## **Ready Set GO!! Committee**

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## What is the Thirteenth Step?

Big Red Book Page 349-350

Some people attending ACA meetings have not grown beyond their victim or victimizer roles. They may attempt to meet their own needs by manipulating newcomers to ACA. This is known as the “13th Step” in most Twelve Step programs. When this happens, it can violate the safety of the meeting and drive away group members. An experienced ACA member should never take financial, emotional, or sexual advantage of anyone, including a new person in ACA. The love and respect we offer to newcomers is a reflection of the love and respect we are learning to offer ourselves.

If we are struggling with this area of our lives, we are usually not willing or ready to surrender acting-out behavior. We may not know how. We may have tried and failed. Some of us are not sure how to face the internal pain and self-hate that drives our selfish behavior. Perpetrator or manipulative behavior is almost always driven by our avoidance to face our abuse and neglect from childhood. This is not an excuse for adult behavior that harms others and us. The perpetrator must be held accountable, but many perpetrators do not link past abuse with their acting-out behavior. If this is our situation as a 13th Stepper, we ask a Higher Power for the willingness to seek extra help and to get honest about the effects of our childhood experiences. We also must get honest about our behavior and its harmful effect on others. We cannot use our childhood abuse as an excuse to perpetrate against others. No matter what we have done, we can still work our program with the knowledge that a Higher Power is with us always. We can change if we have the capacity to be honest. We seek help with an attitude of earnestness and humility.

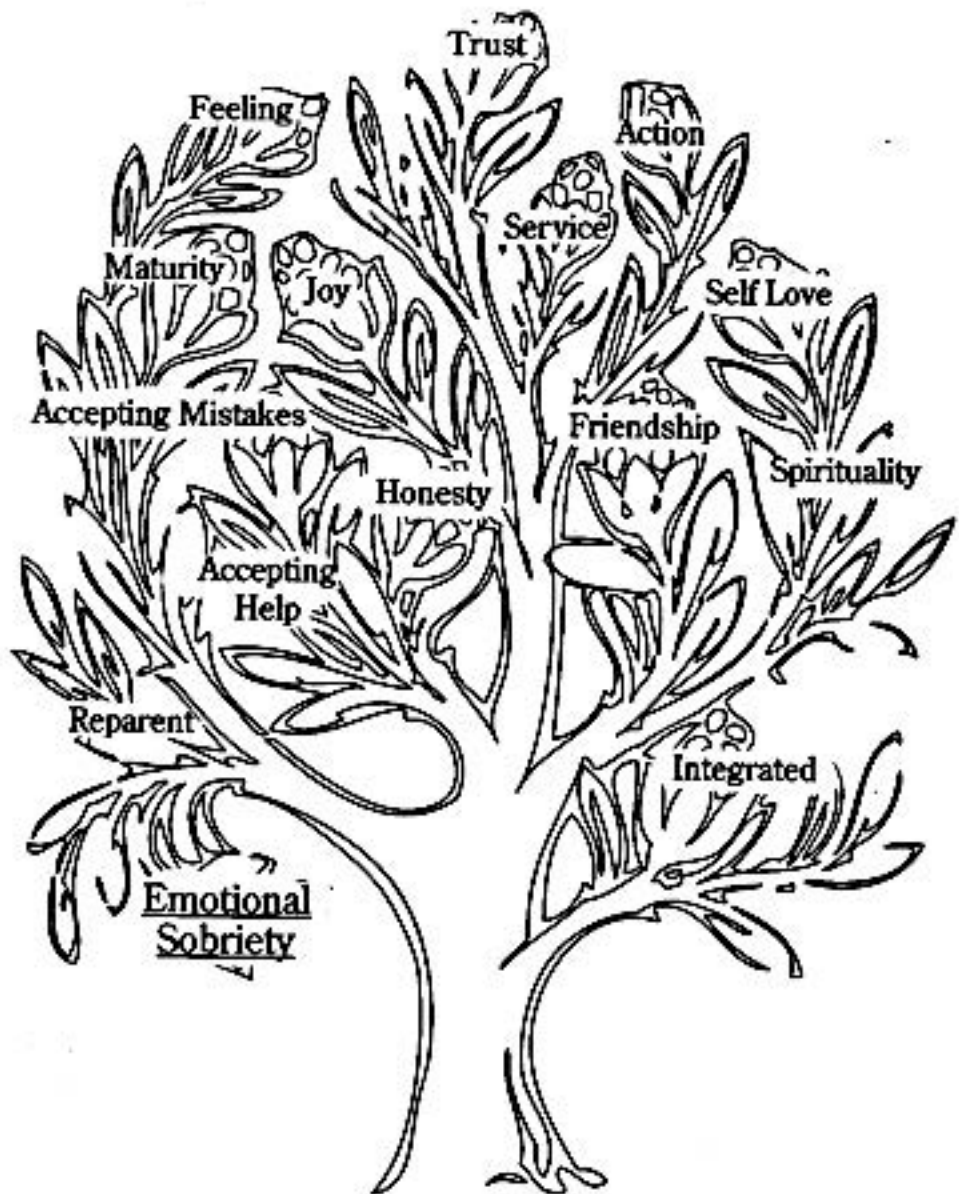


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# THE ACA RECOVERY TREE



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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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**The sharing partners will decide when to committ to attend the ACA 12 Steps Workbook Group Meeting once a week for nine months to one year. This buddy system will give added support for both sharing partners.**

## **Overview**

Page 571 - Paragraph 1

### **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 himself 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 book.” Give yourself a break and read .
5. Get telephone numbers. Don’t isolate.
6. Get a Higher Power.

Page 558 - Paragraphs 1-2

ACA is an independent Twelve Step program founded on the principles of the 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 pulsive behavior. We learn that we can recover from trauma and neglect.

**Welcome to ACA and the journey.**

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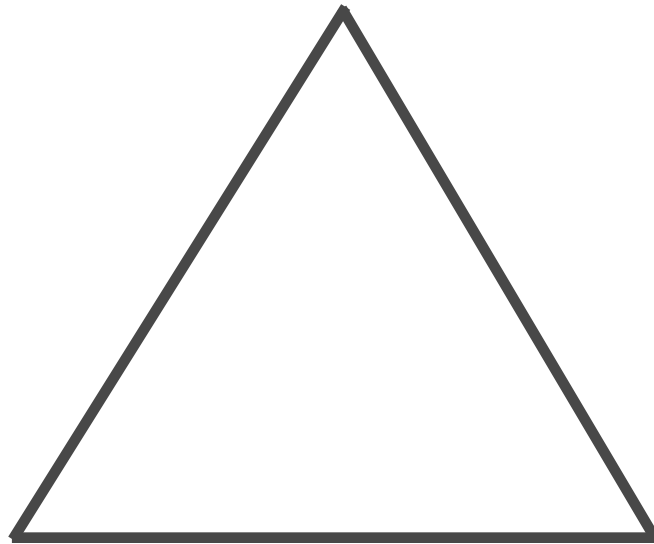
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# ACA Disease Model

*Adult Child*

PTSD  
Stored Trauma  
Neglect

**BODY**



**MIND**

14 Traits  
Laundry List

**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.*

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## **Page 568 - Paragraphs 2-4**

### **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.

## **Page 358 - Paragraph 1**

### **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.

## **Page 93 - Paragraph 1 - Lines 1 & 2**

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.

## 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 effects of family alcoholism.

### Page 82 - Paragraph 1

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.

### Page 82 - Paragraph 2

## 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.

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*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.

**Page 387 - Paragraph 2 - Lines 10-17**

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.

**Page 568 - Paragraphs 5-6**

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.

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### **Page 569 - Paragraph 1 - Lines 1-11**

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.

### **Page 569 - Paragraph 2**

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.

### **Page 569 - Paragraph - 3 - Lines 1-12**

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, wherever and whenever we can. We must get out of ourselves. We insist on enjoying life and being a part of life.

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# Family Types That Can Create Adult Children

Page 57-59



Commonality = shame / abandonment

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, militaristic, 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.

# ACA Twelve Steps

Page 118

## Step One

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

***Page 129 - Spiritual Principles:  
Powerlessness and Surrender***

### **Page 96 - Paragraph 2 - Lines 3-7**

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.”

### **Page 96-97 - Paragraph 3 - 1st and 2nd sentence**

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

### **Page 97 - Lines 13-15**

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

### **Page 97 - Paragraph 1**

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

### **Page 97 - Paragraph 2 - Lines 5-7**

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

### **Page 98 - Paragraph 3 - Lines 2-4**

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

**Page 99 - Paragraph 2 - Lines 4-6**

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.

**Page 99 - Paragraph 3 - Lines 5-8**

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.

**Page 102 - Paragraph 1 - Lines 4-10**

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.

**Page 103 Paragraph 1 Lines 8-12**

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.

**Page 104 - Paragraph 1**

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.

## **Page 104 - Paragraph 2**

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.

## **Page 123 - Paragraph 4**

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,”

## **Page 124 - Paragraph 3**

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 dysfunction.

## **Page 405 - Paragraph 4 - Lines 2-3**

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



**Page 127 - Paragraph 4**  
**FAMILY MEMBER LABELS**

Think about your experiences or what you have heard about relatives in connection with addiction, religion, relationships, food, sex, work, etc.

**Page 128**

The labels for your family members can include one or a combination of labels.

( ☒ THOSE THAT APPLY TO ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY )

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>alcoholic</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>used alcohol/drugs</b>             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>worked a lot (workaholic)</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>religious</b>                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>worried a lot (neurotic)</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>perfectionistic (high strung)</b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>enabler</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>chronically ill, hypochondriac</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>emotionally ill</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>people-pleaser</b>                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>martyr</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>obese sibling/relative</b>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>sickly child, too sensitive</b>                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>loner</b>                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>thief, bogus check writer, inmate</b>                                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>sexually aggressive, not safe</b>                                    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>grabbed or wrestled inappropriately</b>                              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>pill popper (always taking something)</b>                            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>ladies man, player, gigolo, skirt chaser</b>                         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>harsh, always critical, verbally abusive</b>                         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>great cook (always thought of herself last)</b>                      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>undependable, does not follow through</b>                            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>argumentative (will not be quiet, keeps arguments going)</b>         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>violent, slapped others, pinched, threatened, glorified fighting</b> |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>always had her face in a mirror</b>                                  |  |
| <b>(thought she was better than others)</b>  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>heavy debt (always borrowing money)</b>                              |  |
| <b>or big spender (flashy clothes)</b>   |  |

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**Page 155 - Paragraph 2**

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.

**Page 201 - Paragraph 1 - Lines 2-7**

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 bring tears, our grief work will help us find our tears.

**Page 125 - Paragraph 1**

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.

***Congratulations! You have taken Step One.***

**Step Two**

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

***Page 137 - Spiritual Principles:  
Openmindedness and Clarity***

**Page 106 - Paragraph 4**

Moving to Steps Two and Three, many adult children are confronted with the issue 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 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.

**Page 107 - Paragraph 1**

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.

**Page 137 - Paragraph 1**

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.

**Page 107 - Paragraph 3 - Lines 5-8**

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.

**Page 107 - Paragraph 4**

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.

**Pages 135-136 Paragraph 4**

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." By working Step Two, we gain clarity about how our family dysfunction affects us in our lives as adults. We gain clarity about our abandonment and internal shame. Many of us find Step Two sanity through clarity.

**Page 137 - Paragraph 2**

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.

***Congratulations! You have taken Step Two.***

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**Step Three**

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

***Page 149 - Spiritual Principles:  
Willingness and Accepting Help***

**Page 107-108 - Paragraph 5**

Moving into 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.”

**Page 108 - Paragraph 1**

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.

**Page 108 - Paragraph 2**

Meanwhile, Step Three helps further free us from the generational shame and abuse wrought by dysfunctional parents 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. As 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

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come to believe that God hears our prayers. We are less confused on what to pray about. We begin to have true choice.

**Page 142 - Paragraph 1 - Lines 6-14**

In Step Three we open our minds to new possibilities. Some of us are comfortable with the word “God” for a Higher Power. Others 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 to call our Higher Power, we make a decision to turn our will and life over to its care on daily basis.

**Page 142 - Paragraph 2**

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.

**Page 143 - Paragraph 1 - Lines 7-14**

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 finding a way to return to our miracle state.

**Page 143 - Paragraph 2 - Last sentence**

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

### **Pages 143-144 - Paragraph 3**

In addition to a deep sense of shame and abandonment, we believe that most of our emotional and mental distress can be traced to our steadfast nature to control. In ACA, we realize that control was the survival trait which kept us safe or alive in our dysfunctional homes. We controlled our thoughts, our voices, and many times our posture to escape detection from an abusive parent or care giver. We knew our parents were looking for imaginary cues to criticize us or verbally attack us. As adults we continue to control ourselves and our relationships in an unhealthy manner. This brings abandonment or predictable turmoil. We make promises to do better but eventually return to 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.

### **Pages 145-146 - Paragraph 3**

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 homes and relationships. Control meant a sense of safety and predictability; however, we surrendered much of our 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.

### **Page 146 - Paragraph 1**

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 a time.

### **Pages 155-156 - Paragraph 5**

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.

### **Page 149 - 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*

***Congratulations! You have taken Step Three.***



**Step Four**

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

***Page 188 - Spiritual Principles:  
Self-honesty and Courage***

**Page 108 - Paragraph 3**

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.

**Page 109 - Paragraph 1 - Line 2**

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.

**Page 109 - Paragraph 3**

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.

**Page 109 - Paragraph 4**

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.

**Page 109-110 - Paragraph 5 - Line 3 thru the end of the paragraph**

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.

**Page 110 - Paragraph 2**

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.

### **Page 110 -111 - Paragraph 3**

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.

### **Page 157 - Paragraph 1**

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.

### **Page 157 - Paragraph 2**

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.

### **Page 157-158 - Paragraph 4**

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.

### **Page 159 - Paragraph 1**

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.

### **Page 159 - Paragraph 3**

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.

ACA Ready Set GO's Committee was inspired to use our Co-founder Tony A's version of the Blameless Step Four Inventory. We are providing a list of Tony A's version of the 12 Steps for ACA as a separate hand out if anyone would be interested.

† ON PAGE 22: For more information on how adult children internalize their parent's attitudes read: "The Laundry List: The ACoA Experience" by Tony A., with Dan F., 1991, HCI Publications. In this book, Tony created his own version of the Twelve Steps. Step Four from the book states: "We made a searching and blameless inventory of our parents because in essence, we had become them."

***Following on Page 27 and 28, in this presentation, there are two parts to taking this modified version of ACA Ready Set GO's "Blameless" Step Four Inventory.***

#### ***Part One***

***Insert people who have harmed you.***

***Check Dysfunctional Problems pertaining to you.***

#### ***Part Two***

***Insert people who you have harmed.***

***Check Dysfunctional Problems passed on by you.***

***Also included with each Inventory sheet is the Praise Exercise.***

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# ACA's "Blameless" 4th Step Inventory

## Part One

Insert people who have harmed you. Check Dysfunctional Problems pertaining to you. Note the Healing Solutions. Later you will share in detail this inventory with your sharing partner, sponsor or fellow traveler. Take the Praise Exercise. Continue on to Part Two.

### ACA 12 Steps Workbook Pages 70-105

Dysfunctional Problems	✓	People	Healing Solutions
Laundry List Traits			Laundry List Workbook
Family Secrets			Overcome Denial
Shame			Self Love
Abandonment			Loving Parent
Fear			Gentleness
Stored Anger (Resentments)			Forgiveness
Dysfunctional Relationships			Self Respect
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder			Contentment
Frozen Feelings			Rigorous Honesty
Sexual Abuse			Courage
Physical Abuse			Loving Kindness
Emotional Abuse			Trust

### Page 188 - Praise Exercise (Partial List and Excerpts):

Because we operate from a praise deficit, we often do not realize the assets in our lives. **Sit quietly and choose assets for affirmations saying: I am \_\_\_\_\_.** humorous, willing, compassionate, courteous, loving, spiritual, trustworthy, tenacious, a friend, spontaneous, creative, strong, sensitive, talented, prompt, an ACA member.

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# ACA's "Blameless" 4th Step Inventory

## Part Two

Insert people who you have harmed. Check Dysfunctional Problems passed on by you. Note the Healing Solutions. Later you will share in detail this inventory with your sharing partner, sponsor or fellow traveler. Take the Praise Exercise.

### ACA 12 Steps Workbook Pages 70-105

Dysfunctional Problems	✓	People	Healing Solutions
Laundry List Traits			Laundry List Workbook
Family Secrets			Overcome Denial
Shame			Self Love
Abandonment			Loving Parent
Fear			Gentleness
Stored Anger (Resentments)			Forgiveness
Dysfunctional Relationships			Self Respect
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder			Contentment
Frozen Feelings			Rigorous Honesty
Sexual Abuse			Courage
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***Congratulations!***  
***You have taken this modified version of***  
***Ready, Set, GO's***  
***"Blameless" Step Four Inventory.***

**Page 188 - Partial Paragraph 4 - Excerpts**

You have taken ***"ACA Ready Set GO's "Blameless" Step Four Inventory."*** You have balanced this INVENTORY with positive traits that include the courage you exhibited by completing 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 take Step Five.

My 5th Step Date is: \_\_\_\_\_Time:\_\_\_\_\_

**Page 189 - Paragraph 2**

**Important Note:**

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.

**Page 189 - Paragraph 3**

**A Fifth Step Tool for the ACA Sponsor**

Appendix B (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.

***Congratulations! You have taken Step Four***

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**Step Five**

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

***Page 206 - Spiritual Principles:  
Honesty and Trust***

**Page 195 - Paragraph 2**

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.

**Page 195 - Paragraph 3**

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.

**Page 196 - Paragraph 1**

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.



### **Pages 196-197 - Paragraph 3**

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.

### **Page 197 - Paragraph 1**

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

### **Page 197 - Paragraph 5**

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.

### **Page 198 - Paragraph 2**

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.

### **Page 198 - Paragraph 3**

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.

### **Page 199 - Paragraph 2**

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.

### **Page 206 - 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.*

***Congratulations! You have taken Step Five.***

**Step Six**

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

***Page 216 - Spiritual Principle:  
Willingness***

**Page 209 - Paragraph 2**

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.

**Page 209 - Paragraph 3**

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.

**Page 209 - Paragraph 4 - Lines 1 and 2**

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

**Page 210 - Paragraph 2 - First Sentence**

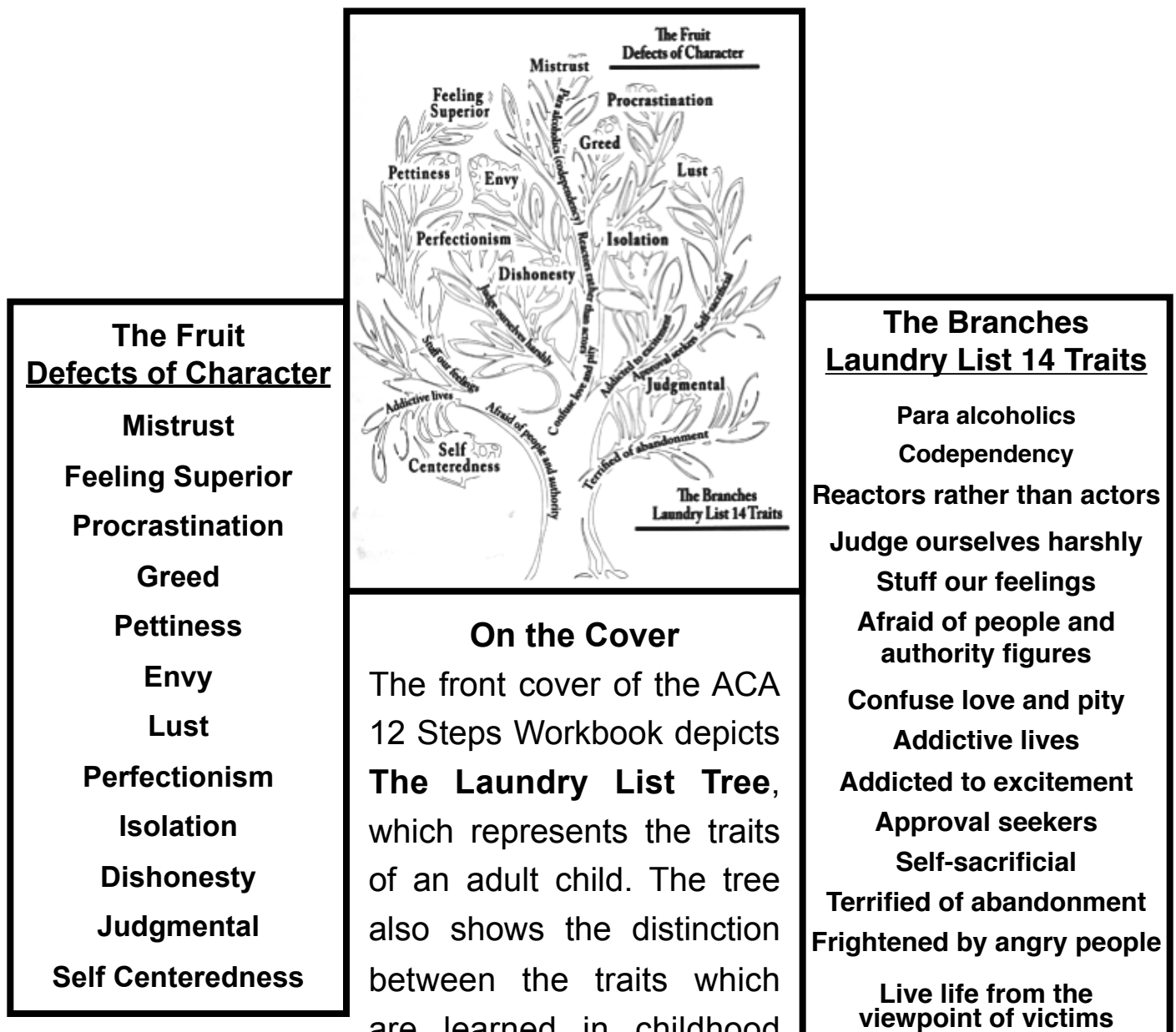
The key to becoming free of character defects while making peace with our survival traits involves a three-pronged approach with willingness, prayer, and time.

**Page 210 - Paragraph 4**

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.

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# THE LAUNDRY LIST TREE



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**Page 212 - Paragraph 2 - 1st Sentence**

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

**Page 212 - Paragraph 3 - Last 2 Sentences**

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

**Page 212 - Paragraph 4 - Sentence 1 and Partial 2nd Sentence**

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.

**Page 213 - Paragraph 2**

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.

**Page 214 - Paragraph 3**

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."

**Page 214 - Paragraph 4**

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.

**Page 215 - Paragraph 1 - Line 4**

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

**Page 215 - Paragraph 2 - Sentences 1-3 & 5**

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.

***Congratulations! You have taken Step Six.***

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**Step Seven**

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

***Page 226 - Spiritual Principle:  
Humility***

**Page 219 - Paragraph 1**

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.

**Page 220 - Paragraph 2**

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.

**Page 220 - Paragraph 3**

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.

### 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:*

- ☐ self-centeredness
- ☐ judgementalness
- ☐ procrastination
- ☐ envy
- ☐ greed
- ☐ lust
- ☐ feeling superior
- ☐ dishonesty
- ☐ pettiness

Page 221

### 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  
survival traits or  
common  
behaviors:*

- ☐ people-pleasing
- ☐ fear of authority figures
- ☐ stuffing our feelings
- ☐ addiction
- ☐ confusing love with pity
- ☐ judging ourselves harshly

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.

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## **Page 222 - Paragraph 2**

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."

## **Page 223 - Paragraph 1**

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.

## **Page 223 - Paragraph 2**

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.

## **Page 223 - Paragraph 3**

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.

## **Page 225 - Paragraph 1**

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.



**Page 225 - Paragraph 3 - Line 6**

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.

**Page 226 - Example:**

<b><i>Continued Defects &lt; &gt;</i></b>		<b><i>Balance/Reparent with</i></b>
Self-centered	< >	Selflessness
Not always honest	< >	Rigorous honesty
Manipulative	< >	Sincerity
Perfectionist	< >	Compromise

***Congratulations! You have taken Step Seven.***

**Step Eight**

**Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.**

***Page 234 - Spiritual Principles:  
Willingness and Self-forgiveness***

**Pages 229-230 - Paragraph 5**

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.

**Page 230 - Paragraph 1**

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.

**Page 231 - Paragraph 2**

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

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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 physically present with them.

### **Page 234 - Paragraph 2**

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.”

***Congratulations! You have taken Step Eight.***

**Step Nine**

**Made direct amends to such people wherever possible,  
except when to do so would injure them or others.**

***Page 249 - Spiritual Principles:  
Forgiveness and Courage***

**Page 237 - Paragraph 1**

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.

**Page 237 - Paragraph 2**

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.

**Pages 238-239 - Paragraph 3**

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.

**Page 239 - Paragraph 1**

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.

### **Page 239 - Paragraph 3**

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.

### **Page 239-240 - Paragraph 4**

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.

### **Page 240 - Paragraph 3**

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.

### **Page 241 - Paragraph 2**

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.

**Page 241 - Paragraph 3 - Thru Line 3**

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.

**Continue to Last 3 Sentences on Page 242**

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

**Page 242 - Paragraph 1**

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.

**Page 242 - Paragraph 2** 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.”**

***Congratulations! You have taken Step Nine.***

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**Step Ten**

**Continued to take personal inventory and  
when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.**

***Page 262 - Spiritual Principles:  
Honesty and Discernment***

**Page 251-252 - Paragraph 5**

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.

**Page 252 - Paragraph 1**

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.

**Page 252 - Paragraph 3**

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.

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#### **Page 252 - Paragraph 4**

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.

#### **Page 254 - Paragraph 1**

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.

#### **Pages 256-257 - Paragraph 3**

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.

***Congratulations! You have taken Step Ten.***

Following is the Step 10 Guide with five exercises for you to take daily.

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# **STEP TEN GUIDE**

## **Personal Inventory**

Pages 257-258 - Paragraph 3

**Circle YES or NO**

1. Am I isolating and not talking about what is really going on with me? YES or NO
2. Did I view anyone as an authority figure to day and feel frightened or rebellious? YES or NO
3. Did I dissociate, fantasize, or become involved in self-harm today? YES or NO
4. Am I keeping secrets and feeling unique? Am I talking about my feelings? YES or NO
5. Am I being honest in my relationships or am I seeking approval over honesty? YES or NO
6. Am I acting “perfect” and obsessing over making mistakes? YES or NO
7. Do I overreact or isolate from others when I perceive that I have been criticized? YES or NO
8. Am I attending ACA meetings to nurture myself and to give back what was given to me? YES or NO
9. Have I acted helpful recently to manipulate others? Y/N
10. Am I secretly angry at someone, but I am avoiding talking about it? YES or NO
11. Have I listened to my Inner Child or True Self today? Y/N
12. Did I judge myself or someone else without mercy today? Y/N
13. Am I listening to the Critical Parent or Loving Parent? Y/N
14. Am I remembering that I can ask for help today and that I can call someone? YES or NO

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# Choice Continuum Exercise

Pages 258-259

Each day circle where you think  
you are in having real choice  
in your life.

Circle 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

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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.

☒ **Check the tools of recovery  
you are using to help**

☐ **Attending ACA 12 Steps -  
Ready Set GO!! Meeting**

☐ **Attending ACA Meetings regularly**

☐ **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

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

Date\_\_\_\_\_

I feel \_\_\_\_\_when: \_\_\_\_\_because: \_\_\_\_\_.

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# Praise Exercise

Pages 261-262

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 \_\_\_\_\_.**

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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.**

***Page 278 - Spiritual Principles:  
Seeking and Listening***

**Pages 265-266 - Paragraph 1 - Sentences 1-10**

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.

**Page 266 - Paragraph 1 - Lines 4-6**

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.

**Page 266 - Paragraph 1 - Last Sentence**

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

**Page 266 - Paragraph 2**

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.

### **Page 267 - Paragraph 3**

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.

### **Pages 272-273 - Paragraph 4**

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.

### **Pages 273-274 - Paragraph 3**

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.

### **Page 275 - Paragraph 1**

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.

### **Page 275 - Paragraph 2**

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.

### **Page 275 - Paragraph 3**

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.

### **Page 274 - Prayer**

*‘God,  
When I look let me truly see.  
When I listen let me truly hear.’*

***Congratulations! You have taken Step Eleven.***



**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.**

***Page 294 - Spiritual Principles:  
Love and Self-love***

**Page 282 - Paragraph 1**

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.

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

**Page 283 - Paragraph 1**

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.

**Page 283 - Paragraph 2**

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.

**Page 284 - Paragraph 3**

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.

**Page 286 - Paragraph 3**

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.

**Page 288 - Paragraph 2**

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.

**Page 289 - Paragraph 5**

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.

**Page 292 - Partial Paragraph 1**

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.

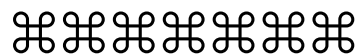
***Congratulations! You have taken Step Twelve.***



By the grace of God,  
May we humbly move onto **working**  
the Twelve Steps of Adult Children  
ACA 12 Steps Workbook.

***Thank you to all the authors of our  
ACA Big Red Book  
and the  
ACA 12 Steps Workbook***

***TO BE CONTINUED  
FOR THE REST  
OF OUR LIVES, PEACE***



***In Closing:***

***The Serenity Prayer***

*God, grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change.  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

***The ACA Serenity Prayer***

*God, grant me the serenity  
To accept the people I cannot change.  
The courage to change the one I can,  
And the wisdom to know that one is me.*

**Keep coming back!**

**It works if you work it!**

**And you are worth it!**

# Twelve Steps of Adult Children



## Steps Workbook

© Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization

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 List Traits represents the limbs while the character defects are the fruit.

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**This Ready Set GO!! presentation was developed for adult children before working the ACA Twelve Steps of Adult Children Workbook. The Ready Set GO!! Committee was formed to develop a script using the ACA Beautiful Big Red Book and the ACA 12 Steps Workbook. It is our hope to submit this script and powerpoint as a motion for the Annual Business Conference in 2011 and/or 2012, to be considered as Conference Approved Literature for ACA members before working the ACA 12 Steps of Adult Children Workbook.**

**We need your support to let ACA/WSO know of the need for this motion, with the hope of helping members finish the workbook and to be confident to be sponsors and to share their experience, strength and hope with those yet to come to ACA.**

**Thank you,  
The Ready Set GO!! Committee**

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# Suggested ACA 12 Step Workbook Format

Begin at 7:00pm  
Put out the readings for members to read when asked  
Clipboard with signup for chairing and phone list and schedule  
Closing at 8:30pm

Welcome to the ACA 12 Step \_\_\_\_\_ Workbook Group. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am your trusted servant 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?

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

Will someone please read the "Laundry List"?  
Will someone please read The Solution?  
Will someone please read The 12 Steps?  
Will someone please read The 12 Traditions?  
Will someone please read a meditation for today?  
(Chairperson's Choice)

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. Allow everyone reasonable time to share. I would like to mention we do not crosstalk.

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. (From Big Red Book - Partial Paragraph 2 and all of the 3rd paragraph-Page 564).

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 8:30. Share a feeling word with a brief comment.

Will someone please read the Inner Child Affirmations?  
Will someone please read The Promises?

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.

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# **HANDOUTS**

**Do not 3-hole punch these pages.  
These handouts are for take-home reading.**

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## Suggestions for Starting an ACA/ACOA Ready Set GO!! Meeting

1. Get a location for four weeks for an hour and half for your meeting.
2. Create a Sign Up Sheet with a cut off date a couple weeks before you will start.
3. Collect money (\$9.00) for printing the script and the handouts.
4. Take your ACA/ACOA/RSG Packet and have the script printed out as it is (one-sided) in black and white, with 3 hole punch. For the handouts usually the two prayer cards go on card stock. The rest of the handouts just print out as is. Some handouts are double sided so you may want to point that out.
5. Purchase three hole folders with pockets.
6. Assemble your scripts before you meet.
7. Meeting day hand out scripts and follow the format as to when to hand out the hand outs.
8. Collect 7th Tradition at meetings.

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## Format for Ready Set GO!!

Please join me in a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Explain how Ready Set GO!! came to be.

A couple of ACA members went to a program called Back to Basics from AA for Overeaters Anonymous. There they went through the 12 Steps in 4 one and half hour sessions using AA's Big Book, the first 162 pages. We thought that would be a good program for ACA in 2010. The idea was brought to the Intergroup and voted to go ahead using our Big Red Book. We created an outline and put it in the computer creating a script. It was proofread and tested by the RSG Committee of Downers Grove, IL and La Grange, IL meetings. It was brought to WSO in 2013. We were asked to test it for another year. It was then tested at meetings in the area. It was officially turned over to WSO in August 2014. While WSO processes Ready Set GO!! for publication, we thought it would be a good idea to continue Ready Set GO!! in different areas of Intergroup. Thus The Traveling Ready Set GO!! was started. The Intergroup was sponsoring RSG and agreed to sponsor the Traveling RSG too. The first Traveling RSG was started October, 2014 in Lake Barrington, IL.

Read the first page to the group about the materials  
and ask members not to make copies.

We will go through the steps by doing the Overview and  
Steps 1, 2 and 3 the first week,  
Steps 4 and 5 the second week,  
Steps 6, 7, 8 and 9 the third week  
and Steps 10, 11 and 12 the fourth week.

The First Week  
Overview thru Steps 1, 2 and 3  
Page 2 thru 22

Read the Welcome to Ready Set GO!! on page 2.

Hand out the Table of Contents.  
Hand out the Reading Sheet.

Inform the group that we will read the script together taking turns and passing. There is no need to read the page numbers or paragraph numbers. Begin with the Overview.

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Stop reading after the Overview Page 11 and breakup into small groups for sharing for 15 mins.

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We do not crosstalk.  
Begin on Page 12 with Step 1.  
Read the Third Step Prayer together on Page 22.  
Stop reading after Step 3 Page 22 and breakup into small groups for sharing for 15 mins.  
There is no crosstalk.

Hand out the Prayer Card.

The Second Week  
Steps 4 and 5  
Page 23 thru Page 32

Hand out Tony A's version of the 12 Steps.

Hand out copies of Part One and Part Two of the 4th Step  
Page 27 and 28.

Stop reading after Step 4 Page 29 and breakup into small groups for sharing for 15 mins.  
We do not crosstalk.

Begin on Page 30 with Step 5

Read the Fifth Step Prayer together.

Stop reading after Step 5 Page 32 and breakup into small groups for sharing for 15 mins.  
There is no crosstalk.

The Third Week  
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Read Seventh Prayers together.

Stop reading after Step 7 Page 39 and breakup into small groups for sharing for 15 mins.  
There is no crosstalk.

Hand out second prayer card.

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Stop reading after Step 9 Page 44 and breakup into small groups for sharing for 15 mins.  
There is no crosstalk.

The Fourth Week  
Steps 10, 11 and 12  
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Begin to read on Page 45.

Hand out Personal Inventory, Choice Continuum Exercise,  
One Day At A Time Exercise, Feelings and Journaling Exercise,  
and Praise Exercise

Stop reading after Page 51 and breakup into small groups for sharing for 15 mins.  
There is no crosstalk.

Begin to read on Page 52 with Step 11.

Read 11th Step Prayer together on Page 54.

Stop reading after Page 56 and breakup into small groups for sharing for 15 mins.  
There is no crosstalk.

Begin to read with page 57 and stop after Page 58.

Hand out the Evaluation Sheet and give them a few minutes to fill it out.

Hand out DVD.

Close with the Serenity Prayer

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# **Ready Set GO!! Script**

## **Created by the: RSG Committee**

**Using Adult Children of Alcoholic/Dysfunctional Families**  
**“Beautiful Big Red Book” & 12 Steps Workbook**

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### **Serenity Prayer**

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

### **The "Laundry List"**

#### *Character Traits of an Adult Child*

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 dysfunctional household. We had come to feel isolated and uneasy with other people, especially authority figures. To protect ourselves, we became people-pleasers, even though we lost our own identities in the process. All the same we would mistake any personal criticism as a threat. We either became alcoholics (or 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 of abandonment.

We lived life from the standpoint of victims. Having an overdeveloped sense of responsibility, we preferred to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. We got guilt feelings when we stood up for ourselves rather than giving in to others. 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 and 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 Twelve Steps of ACA**

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 the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principals in all our affairs.*

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### ***The Twelve Traditions of ACA***

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, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

### ***The Solution***

The solution is to become your own loving parent. As ACA becomes a safe place for you, you will find freedom to express all the hurts and fears you have kept inside and to free yourself from the shame and blame that are carryovers from the past. You will become an adult who is imprisoned no longer by childhood reactions. You will recover the child within you, learning to accept and love yourself.

The healing begins when we risk moving out of isolation. Feelings and buried memories will return. By gradually releasing the burden of unexpressed grief, we slowly move out of the past. We learn to reparent 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.

### ***ACA Serenity Prayer***

God, grant me the serenity  
To accept the people I cannot change.  
The courage to change the one I can,  
And the wisdom to know that one is me.

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**ACA Third Step, Affirmations - Steps One Thru Three -  
Sponsors and Sponsees, and Slogans**

(From Our Beautiful Big Red Book and Workbook) (Created as a separate handout for Ready Set GO!!)

**ACA Third Step Prayer**

*Our Beautiful Big Red Book - Page 149*

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

**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 and 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)**

*Our Beautiful Big Red Book - Page 386*

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 take 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 experience as children.  
I am more alike than I am different from another person.

=====

## **Program Slogans That Work**

*Our Beautiful 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 to 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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## ACA Third Step Prayer

BRB Page 149

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.

=====

## Fifth Step Prayer

BRB Page 206

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.

=====

## Seventh Step Prayer - Character Defects (BRB Page 220-221)

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.

*Select defects of character:*

*"I humbly ask you to:*

*"Remove my defect of \_\_\_\_\_ . Amen."*

self-centeredness

judgementalness

perfectionism

procrastination

envy

greed

lust

feeling superior

dishonesty

pettiness

## 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 survival  
traits or common

behaviors:

people-pleasing

fear of authority figures

stuffing our feelings

addiction

confusing love with pity

judging ourselves harshly

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## Step Nine Suggested Amends

BRB - Page 242 - Paragraph 2

"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 Eleven Prayer

BRB - Page 274

*God,*

*When I look let me truly see.*

*When I listen let me truly hear.*

---

## The Serenity Prayer

*God, grant me the serenity*

*To accept the things I cannot change.*

*The courage to change the things I can,*

*And the wisdom to know the difference.*

## The ACA Serenity Prayer

*God, grant me the serenity*

*To accept the people I cannot change.*

*The courage to change the one I can,*

*And the wisdom to know that one is me.*

---

## 18 Spiritual Principles of ACA 12 Steps:

Powerlessness, Surrender, Open Mindness, Clarity, Willingness, Accepting Help,

Self Honesty, Courage, Honesty, Trust, Humility, Self Forgiveness, Forgiveness,

Discernment, Seeking, Listening, Love, and Self Love.

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# ACA/ACOA's Co-Founder Tony A's 12 Steps

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

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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.

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# ACA's "Blameless" 4th Step Inventory

## Part One

Insert people who have harmed you. Check Dysfunctional Problems pertaining to you. Note the Healing Solutions. Later you will share in detail this inventory with your sharing partner, sponsor or fellow traveler. Take the Praise Exercise. Continue on to Part Two.

### ACA 12 Steps Workbook Pages 70-105

Dysfunctional Problems	✓	People	Healing Solutions
Laundry List Traits			Laundry List Workbook
Family Secrets			Overcome Denial
Shame			Self Love
Abandonment			Loving Parent
Fear			Gentleness
Stored Anger (Resentments)			Forgiveness
Dysfunctional Relationships			Self Respect
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder			Contentment
Frozen Feelings			Rigorous Honesty
Sexual Abuse			Courage
Physical Abuse			Loving Kindness
Emotional Abuse			Trust

### Page 188 - Praise Exercise (Partial List and Excerpts):

Because we operate from a praise deficit, we often do not realize the assets in our lives. **Sit quietly and choose assets for affirmations saying: I am \_\_\_\_\_.** humorous, willing, compassionate, courteous, loving, spiritual, trustworthy, tenacious, a friend, spontaneous, creative, strong, sensitive, talented, prompt, an ACA member.

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# ACA's "Blameless" 4th Step Inventory

## Part Two

Insert people who you have harmed. Check Dysfunctional Problems passed on by you. Note the Healing Solutions. Later you will share in detail this inventory with your sharing partner, sponsor or fellow traveler. Take the Praise Exercise.

### ACA 12 Steps Workbook Pages 70-105

Dysfunctional Problems	✓	People	Healing Solutions
Laundry List Traits			Laundry List Workbook
Family Secrets			Overcome Denial
Shame			Self Love
Abandonment			Loving Parent
Fear			Gentleness
Stored Anger (Resentments)			Forgiveness
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## STEP TEN GUIDE

### Personal Inventory

BRB - Pages 257-258 - Paragraph 3

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Circle: Yes or No

1. Am I isolating and not talking about what is really going on with me? Yes or No
  2. Did I view anyone as an authority figure to day and feel frightened or rebellious? Yes or No
  3. Did I dissociate, fantasize, or become involved in self-harm today? Yes or No
  4. Am I keeping secrets and feeling unique? Am I talking about my feelings? Yes or No
  5. Am I being honest in my relationships or am I seeking approval over honesty? Yes or No
  6. Am I acting "perfect" and obsessing over making mistakes? Yes or No
  7. Do I overreact or isolate from others when I perceive that I have been criticized? Yes or No
  8. Am I attending ACA meetings to nurture myself and to give back what was given to me? Y/N
  9. Have I acted helpful recently to manipulate others? Yes or No
  10. Am I secretly angry at someone, but I am avoiding talking about it? Yes or No
  11. Have I listened to my Inner Child or True Self today? Yes or No
  12. Did I judge myself or someone else without mercy today? Yes or No
  13. Am I listening to the Critical Parent or Loving Parent? Yes or No
  14. Am I remembering that I can ask for help today and that I can call someone? Yes or No
- 

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Circle: Yes or No

1. Am I isolating and not talking about what is really going on with me? Yes or No
2. Did I view anyone as an authority figure to day and feel frightened or rebellious? Yes or No
3. Did I dissociate, fantasize, or become involved in self-harm today? Yes or No
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## STEP TEN GUIDE

### Personal Inventory

BRB - Pages 257-258 - Paragraph 3

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- 

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Circle: Yes or No

1. Am I isolating and not talking about what is really going on with me? Yes or No
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13. Am I listening to the Critical Parent or Loving Parent? Yes or No
14. Am I remembering that I can ask for help today and that I can call someone? Yes or No

**Each day circle where you think you are in having real choice in your life.**  
Circle 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

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

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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 12 Steps -  
Ready Set GO!! Orientation
- ☐ Attending ACA Meetings regularly
- ☐ 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

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

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# STEP TEN GUIDE

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_ 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

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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 \_\_\_\_\_.**

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# Ready Set GO!!

## Participant Evaluation

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

WEEK# \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Completing this evaluation will help  
the Ready Set GO!! Committee  
to serve your needs as best as possible  
while maintaining a safe environment.

### **RSG CONTENT** (Circle your response to each item.)

1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree  
4=Agree 5=Strongly agree N/A=Not applicable

I was well informed about the objectives of RSG. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

RSG lived up to my expectations. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

### **RSG DESIGN** (Circle your response to each item.)

RSG objectives were clear to me. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

RSG activities stimulated my learning. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

The activities in RSG gave me sufficient practice and feedback. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

The difficulty level of RSG was appropriate. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

The pace of RSG was appropriate. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

### **RSG RESULTS** (Circle your response to each item.)

I accomplished the objectives of RSG. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

I will be able to use what I learned in RSG. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

### **SELF-PACED DELIVERY** (Circle your response to each item.)

RSG was a good way for me to learn about the 12 Steps. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

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**How would you improve Ready Set GO!!? (Check all that apply.)**

- ☐ Provide better information before the RSG.
- ☐ Clarify the RSG objectives.
- ☐ Reduce the content covered in RSG.
- ☐ Increase the content covered in RSG.
- ☐ Update the content covered in RSG.
- ☐ Improve the instructional methods.
- ☐ Make RSG activities more stimulating.
- ☐ Improve RSG organization.
- ☐ Make RSG less difficult.
- ☐ Make RSG more difficult.
- ☐ Slow down the pace of RSG.
- ☐ Speed up the pace of RSG.
- ☐ Allot more time for RSG.
- ☐ Shorten the time for RSG.
- ☐ Improve the handouts used in RSG.
- ☐ Add powerpoint presentation to RSG.

**What other improvements would you recommend for RSG?**

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**What is least valuable about RSG?**

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**What is most valuable about RSG?**

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