

April 30

Disease of Alcoholism

“Since alcoholism is a family disease, all family members are affected without having to take a drink. With an amazing predictability, the children grow up to be addicted or to marry an addicted or compulsive person.” BRB p. 13

We may have been conscious of the effects of the alcoholic on our lives. Or more likely, we denied that their disease had any effect on us.

Slowly the veils of denial were lifted as we saw how, like it or not, we had been impacted by the disease, even if the alcoholic had been removed from the home. We may have unconsciously found a new and improved alcoholic personality type with which to continue the crazy-making game of dissociation.

When we attend ACA meetings, we seem to have an innate sense that the meeting space is safe as we speak honestly about what we are feeling and experiencing. We begin to see the patterns and habits in all of our relationships – that the dysfunction can spring from our lips without us even noticing it. We become more aware of the unhealthy choices we make, both consciously and unconsciously, and we choose different options.

On this day I acknowledge that I was affected by the family disease of alcoholism. I will pay attention to the patterns and habits I had denied so that I don't continue to repeat them.

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July 30

Tradition Seven

“In ACA, we learn to give for the right reason, and we learn the right amount to give. We give our fair share and let others give their fair share, so we all take ownership in ACA.” BRB p. 524

At ACA meetings the Seventh Tradition reminds us that we contribute as we are able. There was a time when a quarter was thought to be enough. As times changed, a dollar seemed about right. More recently, two dollars has become more the norm.

As the fellowship grows, the need for financial contributions from members may also grow. Some groups pay higher rents and may ask members to contribute more if they can. However, this is not obligatory and never a requirement for membership.

Financial contributions support not only individual meetings, but also local Intergroup and the World Service Organization (WSO), which spreads our message around the globe. The WSO hires special workers for its literature distribution center. Translations have to be verified, books printed and shipped. Much occurs behind the scenes to make carrying the ACA message possible.

Like other 12 Step fellowships, ACA does not depend on anyone else to take care of our “house.” Being fully self-supporting, we do not owe outside interests, so no one else tells us where or how to carry our message.

On this day I will give the financial contribution I can so that the meetings I attend will thrive. I do my part to ensure that the ACA message is available to the still-suffering adult children of my community and around the world.

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October 29

Parental Blame

“It is not the purpose of the Twelve Steps of ACA to place blame on the parent or caregivers; however, the adult child also must not shield the parents during the inventory process.” BRB p. 109

Condemning or raging at ourselves for not doing something “right” is a carryover from our dysfunctional childhood. This behavior was programmed into us. In ACA, we learn to change that by re-programming ourselves to be kind to both our Inner Child and our adult self.

When we’re tempted to get stuck in blaming our parents for everything that’s wrong in our lives, we are reminded that ACA is not about blame. We revisit the past to learn why we think and act as we do and find out how to change our thought patterns. And we accept responsibility for our own actions as adults.

While we strive to forgive our parents so we can let go of our resentment, this doesn’t mean we forgive their deeds. We learn to forgive the person separate from the action. Dysfunction is a family disease passed down through the generations. Even though we forgive, it may still be necessary to separate from people who continue to be unsafe.

We recognize where our self-harming behaviors originated and know that we don’t have to hang onto them. We accept that we are human beings, and as such, we know that we will inevitably make mistakes. But we are not now, nor have we ever been a mistake.

On this day I honor myself as my own best friend. I will stop the cycle of self-inflicted emotional abuse learned through the generations of dysfunction.

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December 31

The Slogans

“Keep coming back. It works!” BRB p. 565

This is a wonderful, simple old slogan we hear in recovery, but what does it mean? For newcomers, it may just seem like a nice platitude. But those of us with some experience in ACA know that little by little, small miracles happen as we continue to show up.

Perhaps we find ourselves picking up the phone more easily, or we talk to our fellow travelers with a greater feeling of safety. We start to feel less alone or unique in the world. We feel less shame in telling our stories. We start to disbelieve and detach from the messages the family disease trained us to integrate. We come to know we are innocent children and that we each have a Higher Power of our own choosing. We start to sincerely forgive ourselves for mistakes we’ve made. In doing so, we realize that even though we have made mistakes, *we* are not mistakes.

These are some of the miracles we start to experience simply by showing up. We do our part; our Higher Power does its part. Our efforts are accumulating. Invisible scales of compassion, not judgment, are beginning to tip in our favor. “Keep coming back. It works!” means what it says. Miracles can and do happen in this program.

On this day I will trust that my actions in recovery are cumulative, and nothing I do goes to waste. Little by little, my efforts pay off.

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