

June 30

Not Alone

***“On our journey, we need the assistance of a trusted friend with knowledge of recovery.” BRB
p. 379***

The ACA Big Red Book tells us we're trained with 72 seasons (18 years) of learned survival skills that turned into dysfunctional behavior as adults. Knowing this makes it seem unreasonable to expect total recovery in a few meetings, a few hours with the ACA Workbook or even a cover-to-cover read of the Big Red Book.

In cases of divorce, it's said that it takes a year of grieving to recover for every five years of marriage. If we translate that formula to our circumstances of grieving our ACA "soul rupture," it becomes even more understandable that recovery is an ongoing process. And it can't truly happen without the help of our Higher Power and fellow travelers who are able to lead us away from years of frozen emotion.

ACA recovery has its ups and downs, no matter how hard we work at it. So it's important to know we can relapse, just as in other Twelve Step programs. However, an ACA relapse can take us into periods of sadness and isolation. It becomes less frequent as we continue to give ourselves permission to be human and to make mistakes. We learn to put down the mirror of harsh self-judgment to let life and serenity in.

On this day I will remember that recovery is a journey that I don't have to take alone. I will trust other ACAs who are also seeking the truth to help me.

September 29

Tradition Nine

“With service grounded in love, ACA creates service boards and committees directly responsible to those they serve. e committees have bylaws and procedures but, as such, are not organized into a governing body.” BRB p. 536

We come to an ACA meeting because we hear it’s where we can talk about our childhood stu . When we walk in, someone starts the meeting, someone else makes a secretary’s report, someone else collects the donations, and others straighten thing up at the end. No one in the meeting is in charge; the group is in charge of all its a airs.

e upside-down pyramid represents our corporate structure, with the membership at the top and committees or service boards underneath. e newcomer has as much right to speak up as the most seasoned member. If an issue comes up and the group decides to form a committee, the committee still answers to the group. If a meeting or an intergroup makes inquiries to the World Services Organization, they must answer.

None of our trusted servants are given any power over an individual unless the individual presents a risk to other members. en, the overall safety of the members must be cared for, with a measure of compassion and appropriate assertiveness.

Our love for each other and the realization of the enormous pain we have been in are what support the structure that keeps our fellowship functioning.

On this day I will be a responsible member of the ACA fellowship, responding to my fellow ACAs with the same gentleness, humor, love, and respect I have been given and have learned to show myself.

December 29

Fellowship

“In addition to the meetings, we chat after the meeting with others. We go for coffee at a nearby coffee shop, and we introduce ourselves. This is carrying the message as well, outside the walls of the meeting.” BRB p. 514

We go to a meeting and afterwards people stand around and talk and maybe some go out for coffee. It's part of the fellowship of this program. But why is it important? Why should we participate?

When we begin our positive life changes, we often feel less comfortable with the non-program people in our lives. It can become a challenge to have more functional relationships.

For most of us, our meetings become another family - one built on trust and shared recovery experiences. But even so, it's often uncomfortable for a lot of us to have conversations with wonderful people we may not know well. Going out for coffee is a great way to practice new behavior and establish relationships, even if it doesn't come easy. We use this as a way of further introducing ourselves to our fellow ACA members.

On this day I will practice new behaviors by spending more social time with my new family.

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March 30

Tradition Three

“Adult children who are codependents, addicts, debtors, overeaters, sexually compulsive, alcoholics, and gamblers are members if they have a desire to recover from the effects of a dysfunctional family. We cannot turn away anyone seeking help from the isolation and madness of the effects of a dysfunctional upbringing.” BRB p. 505

We all-or-nothing thinking that most ACAs have before recovery would have us draw bold lines about who is a bona fide ACA member or not. Time has shown us that the people coming to a meeting are the only ones who can say they are members, and once having claimed a seat, and with rare exception, no one can force them to give it up.

Our fellowship welcomes anyone from a dysfunctional home, whether alcohol was present or not. Adults brought up in foster homes usually lived in dysfunctional situations and can also find a safe place with us to share the effects of their childhood experiences.

There are some occasions when a member creates such fear that the group's conscience has to step in to set up appropriate boundaries. Fortunately, these instances are extremely rare. The scarier idea is that an adult child may be turned away from our door, usually by well-meaning ACAs who unknowingly let their own biases get in the way. Just because someone doesn't talk, or they yell, curse, pout, or cry does not disqualify them from membership.

On this day, unless someone is creating a hazard to others or to the meeting property, I will do what I can to ensure that all members are free to express their experiences as best they can.