



In This Issue

2018 Convention Update	1
2019 European Hosting	1
The Journey of Joyful Meditation	2
<i>Strengthening My Recovery,</i> Step Ten	2
Promise Eleven is Alive and Well	3
Promise Ten	3
Helpless No More	4
Thank You to My New Family	6
Step Eleven	6
The Body Remembers	7
Eliminating Existential Dread	8
Believe In "More"	9
Step Twelve	9
Promise Twelve	9
Vignettes of a Life's Journey	10
Magnificent Minsk – 2nd Annual ACA Summer Fest	11

About the ACA ComLINE

The ACA *ComLine* is published quarterly by Adult Children of Alcoholics® World Service Organization, with one free report of the Annual Business Conference (ABC). The *ComLine* is intended as a communication line from WSO to the fellowship of ACA around the world, and as a forum for the fellowship to share recovery. The *ComLine* slogan is "Experience, Strength, and Hope." The opinions expressed are those of the individuals writing the articles and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ACA fellowship or WSO.

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ACA WSO, Inc.
1458 East 33rd St.
Signal Hill, CA
90755 USA
adultchildren.org
adultchildren.org/comline

2018 ACA World Convention to be held in Toronto



Located on the northwestern shore of Lake Ontario, Toronto is the largest city in Canada, and is the provincial capital of Ontario.

The convention web site is open for registration for the hotel and the ABC & AWC convention, www.acaworldconvention.org.

Key Information:

- **Reserve the Dates:**
April 26-29 2018
ABC: April 26-27, 2018;
AWC: April 27, 7:00 p.m. - April 29, 2018
- **Book your hotel room early to ensure your room and the special price of \$159.99 CAD.**
A block of rooms has been reserved for Monday, April 23 through Monday, April 30, 2018.

ACA 2019 Annual Business Conference – Application to Host

The process of being chosen to host begins with an initial application, which is to be completed November 15, 2017.

For details, visit

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf5g03bWzTWOZ0TEfAFHeb4N3HOprR851Zrpl5IOH04_W_a5Iq/viewform

If you need assistance with sharing a room, or if you want to host an international ACA fellow traveler during the convention, contact acasharedaccommodation@gmail.com.

Register for the Convention:

- **Annual Business Conference:**
No Fee
- **ACA World Convention (AWC) Super early registration** at \$50 CAD before November 30, 2017. The rate will increase after this date.

Calling All Members to Speak or Be a Workshop Leader:

The due date for applications is November 10, 2017. Our theme is "Becoming Your Own Loving Parent." We have an amazing fellowship and would love to hear your ideas! Submit your application at <https://goo.gl/forms/4lxoMWatvfIYzbBu2>.

Celebrating Our 40 Years of ACA Fellowship Together:

We will need a lot of volunteers to help with the planning and during the convention. We would love to hear from you!

We are available at acaworldconvention@gmail.com. Drop us a line!! 🐦

In Loving Service,
*The ACA Toronto
Host Committee for the
2018 ACA World Convention*

The Journey of Joyful Meditation

by *Mardi M., Montana*

When I finally found an ACA sponsor, one of the first things I asked her was, "Tell me about meditation." When I think back to what she said, it makes me smile. She told me there were many books about meditation, and I needed to discover what works for me. I quickly added a tabbed section in my ACA three-ringed notebook: Meditation.

I focused on the flame

I went to the library and checked out a variety of books on meditation. I remember so clearly the first time I made a decision to try it. I got up early one morning when dawn was just beginning. In the gentle darkness, I lit a candle and set it on the kitchen table. I was going to "sit" for five minutes. I focused my attention on the flame and tried to quiet the 50 radio stations in my mind. Five minutes seemed like eternity. But, I did it! That was the beginning of my journey with Step 11.

Finding peace within

Once at a meeting, a member invited a counselor who meditated, to talk about meditation. Years later, someone invited a meditation teacher to do a loving-kindness meditation. By that time, I was getting up early to "sit" for an hour, before my family got up. Sometimes I would read out of an early meditation book and then sit quietly and meditate on that as a topic. One time, my son, who was 10, got up and "sat" with me; he fell asleep. We laugh about it now.

I started to ask ACA members to go for hikes, and we began having glorious hikes on mountain trails. Always, at the turnaround point, we stopped to pick a comfortable spot to "sit" for at least 15 minutes. One time a deer walked right by me, within six feet. Or, sitting by the river, I would watch a piece of cotton up in the distance, floating, then it floated past me and disappeared downstream out of sight. Sometimes, I'd invite my dad to come



sit by me and talk with me (he had been gone for years by then). I discovered I could meditate any time: in the back yard, in my easy chair, in the woods, anywhere.

The "soul" work of ACA

I attended my first ACA meeting in August of 1986. I truly believe ACA recovery is "soul" work, and it has been an incredible journey! I love all the Steps, but I have a deep, kind, loving appreciation of Step 11: *...sought through prayer and meditation....*

I love being in the present moment with my Higher Power, and am grateful for every second. Thank you, ACA, for helping me to find myself and to discover the incredible gift of joy and freedom in my life today. ✨

Strengthening My Recovery – Step Ten

"We learn to take a balanced view of our behavior, avoiding the tendency to take too much responsibility for the actions of others." BRB p. 251

We didn't learn balance in our families of origin. Most of us became either super-responsible or super-irresponsible. There didn't seem to be much of a middle ground.

Those of us who were super-responsible often believed we were in charge of everyone else. In the process, we didn't learn to focus on ourselves.

In Step Four we identify our problematic behaviors. As we continue to work the Steps, we increase our awareness of those behaviors and how they affect our relationships with other people. We examine our demands, our criticisms, and our negativity. We inventory our past feelings and motives so we can separate our own dysfunction from that of our

family of origin. We begin re-parenting ourselves to replace the lack of nurturing and the imbalance we grew up with.

When we regularly practice Step Ten, we are able to stay current. Learning to keep the scales balanced, we acknowledge our feelings and act purposefully in situations, thereby gaining emotional sobriety. We celebrate our lives as they become more sane and manageable.

On this day I will identify my feelings and focus on my own needs, I will practice balance with my responsibilities to others and my responses to the situations I face. ✨

Promise Eleven is Alive and Well!

by Leslie O.

I love The Promises, and I currently have a favorite: Promise 11: *With help from our ACA support group, we will slowly release our dysfunctional behaviors.*

My step group just finished Step 12 in the ACA Yellow Workbook. I can't begin to count all the dysfunctional behaviors I've released! But I'll try. There is no way I could have done this without my step group, which is four of us who have been working together now for more than two years. I could also not have done it without the Wednesday night Big Red Book meeting or the Friday night women's *Strengthening My Recovery* meeting. All who have come and gone to those meetings have also been an integral part of my recovery. Here's just a sampling of the dysfunctional behaviors I've been releasing:

Gossiping

I'm still working on this, but I have reduced it greatly. Funny thing is, when I stopped gossiping, my resentments decreased by about 90%!

Trying to do everything myself

This has been a real eye-opener, and I don't have to make all the decisions. I reach out – to my Higher Power, to my “otter buddy” (did you know otters hold hands when they're sleeping so they don't float away?!), to my other step sisters. I ask other people's opinions, I ask for actual help like, “yes, please bring those chairs downstairs for me.” In the

past, I would have taken all the chairs downstairs by myself over the next few days after the party.

Expecting people to read my mind

Just tonight I asked someone for the money she owes me for the cruise we're going to take to see tree swallows. In the past, I would have just hoped that she'd remember and give me the money. If not, I would have written it off. And been pissed at her for not remembering and/or reading my mind! It would have eventually killed our friendship, I'm sure. It would not have mattered that I was perfectly justified in asking for money for something the other person had agreed to pay for.

Being a reactor

I PAUSE (someone told me that stands for Pray And Use Spiritual Energy), but sometimes the pause is so slight that there is not even room to squeeze a prayer in there! But most times today, the pauses are much longer than a moment. Sometimes they are a week. I'm actually in the middle of a pause that is over two months old. I was asked, “Are you going to come back and give us a second chance?” and I said, “I'm not going to make any promises,” because I honestly don't know if I'm going to go back. I've taken the summer off and it's not over yet!

I was always exasperated

It's ME! I'M the problem! People had told me that I think

I know everything, and that I think I'm always right, but I honestly didn't know what they were talking about! (*Meeeee??*) Now I know what they meant – I was always exasperated because on a subconscious level I truly believed that if traffic just went the way *I* wanted it to go... if people would just handle their relationships the way *I* wanted them to (even though I have never once had a functional romantic relationship!)... if the person at the quick check aisle at the grocery store followed directions and only had 12 items the way I would do it (and everybody *should* do it, there's a sign, people!) – then all would be well with the world.

Letting people trample my boundaries

Before, I never understood healthy boundaries. Today, I put me in charge of my boundaries, not everyone else! If I don't want to take an outreach call, I turn off my phone. I don't leave it on and expect people to “guess” that I don't want outreach calls right now, then get pissed off at them for not reading my mind and knowing that this really isn't a good time (which I would never tell them, of course – I'd take the call and be resentful).

I am so grateful for my ACA family, the meetings, the literature, sponsors, etc. All you offer to us is such a special gift, and I'm so glad I was willing to open your package. The Promises really do come true. Life just keeps getting better and better. Thank you! 🦋

Promise Ten

“Fears of failure and success will leave us, as we intuitively make healthier choices.”

Helpless No More

by Megan W.

I was incapable of managing
 The insanity in which I was raised.
 Helpless to act, powerless to control.
 Only a scared young child with no skills,
 I quickly learned to adapt to survive.
 Fearful, I did what was necessary
 To limit the pain inflicted on me.
 “Don’t talk, trust, or feel” was my mantra.
 I turned inside myself. Made myself small.
 Wanting to disappear from the harsh words
 And raised voices, I withdrew to my room,
 Trying to use books to combat my fear.

Any situation could turn angry.
 Kind words said in derogatory tones
 Were often the first indication of
 The meanness to come. In roll the storm clouds.
 Yelling, stomping, slamming doors echoing
 Throughout the house. Anxiety ran high.
 All close objects were used for punishment.
 My fault, I was told, when the yard stick broke
 Across my back. I just wasted money.
 Red metal spoons, belts with shiny buckles,
 Even fly swatters were her instruments
 To teach me to be a good little girl.

Most things I said were labeled “arguing”.
 Arguing earned me many punishments:
 Writing five hundred matching sentences,
 Cleaning until every room was spotless,
 Being confined to my bedroom, alone.
 I kept quiet until I erupted.
 Unable to continue swallowing
 My speech, I vomited anger right back.
 Tried to hold it in, but wasn’t able.
 Indignantly livid, my screams matched theirs.
 Both my incensed feet stomped in time with theirs,
 Though my door slammed harder, faster than theirs.

Not just fear, I endured criticism.
 Nothing about me was acceptable.
 My very presence brought irritation.
 The list of things “wrong” with me was endless:
 Smart mouth, quick temper, fat knees, chewed nails,
 Silly beliefs, grades in school, saggy boobs,
 Bushy eyebrows, clothing choices, fav movies,
 Vocabulary, diet, music tastes.
 I learned their lesson: they thought me worthless.
 Good only for mocking and hard labor.
 I considered myself Cinderella,
 Being abused by family who hates her.

It was made clear I mattered far less than
 My siblings. Our treatment was off balance.
 No wrong came from them. No right came from me.
 The easy scapegoat, it was all my fault.

No matter what happened, I took the blame.
 No wonder my anger grew at warp speed.
 I believed all the words they said to me.
 I knew no better – a helpless child.
 No one knew it would grow to consume me.
 It was assumed I’d get past “growing pains”.
 I was just a normal adolescent.
 So everyone thought. So I was told...

Scared child to maladjusted adult,
 Unsure how to act in society.
 Friends were never as close as I wanted.
 They’d show interest and I’d suffocate them,
 Not understanding why everyone left.
 I did all I could to make them happy.
 I thought it my job to please those people.
 I lost myself trying to be who they wanted,
 And then was crushed when I also lost them.
 Soon I became numb and kept others out.
 Easier than allowing them inside.
 They wouldn’t stick around long, anyhow.

All wrapped up, I isolated myself.
 People, places and things terrified me.
 Especially people. Angry people.
 Angry ones who had power over me.
 My boss’ loud, raised voice made me tremble.
 Panic would arise at the mere thought of
 Conversing with those in authority.
 Making it happen was impossible.
 No matter how tolerant and gentle,
 I see a monster in my boss’ chair;
 Waiting for fuck ups. Waiting to eat me.
 Despite its benign presence, I felt no mercy.

I’ve known in my being that I’m just wrong.
 Between the two of us, you’re always right.
 I’m stupid, thoughtless, silly, just plain dumb.
 All your kind words hit me like pointed barbs.
 I know that you can’t possibly believe
 The positive things you say about me.
 What’s the set up? What’s coming at me next?
 There’s no fucking way that you could like me.
 You don’t know me yet. Not the “real” me.
 Just wait until I show you who’s inside.
 I know me, and I despise who I am.
 My inner view is spot on. Give it time.

Numbing out as I have, I’m just not sure
 How to express what I’m feeling within.
 I’m incapable of telling myself
 What’s going on. Far less could I tell you.
 I can’t name most emotions, likely ‘cause
 All I feel is numbness, anger, guilt.
 Guilt pops up when I think of myself first.
 Don’t worry, I won’t stand up for myself.

I know that's wrong. Easier to deal
With feeling shat on and walked all over
Than to think I have the right to matter.

I know I exist to give in to you.

The cherry on top is the drama that
Endlessly follows me. I can't stop it.

I feel calm when the chaos starts up.
I'm knocked off my feet when things are steady.

I don't know how to let life be peaceful.

That's just not normal. Doesn't feel right.

I am more settled when you start to yell.

Despite my fear, anger is a welcome
Friend. Comfortable and predictable.

I can handle disorder and discord.

Tranquility is unknown and scary.

Commotion is the drug that will soothe me.

As the fog of denial releases
Its hold on me, I can see the Laundry
List of bad behaviors that I possess.

No longer a child, I can hardly
Claim helplessness. No more in denial,
I've lost excuses not to act, to change.

In the past, I'd rebuff accusations
Of the precise actions just detailed,
When I did all of the above...and worse.

I now see my games, manipulation
Of people and, of course, my victimhood.
Others saw my conduct more clearly than I.

Now that I'm aware, now that I can see,

I can take the twelve necessary steps

To obtain the changes desired

In my life. No way will it be easy,

But the program is so simply laid out.

All I have to do is follow, and

I'll see drastic differences.

Read the book, attend meetings, call people,
Share honestly and, above all, trust God.

I know it's a process, not an event,

But slowly, surely, life will get better.

There is hope at the end of this tunnel.

Already I feel a weight lifted.

Seeing this makes life more manageable.

I'm still powerless. I have no control

Over other people, places, or things,

But there is one person I can control.

I now have the wisdom to know that the

Only person I can force to act is

Me, myself, and I. Now, as an actor,

I am no longer that helpless child,

Just tossed about and reacting to life.

I no longer need to be miserable.

I'm not perfect, but GOD's perfecting me.

I'll continue to come out of isolation.

I'll be rigorously honest, even

With myself. I'll reach out to others and
Let them in. Trust them. Be vulnerable.

I'll stand up for and take care of myself.

I'll show and feel love, intimacy.

It will be a gift, not an unknown fear.

With the help of God and fellow travelers,

I'll know I matter. That I'm important.

I'll expect the best and I will get it.

I'll reparent myself with lots of love.

I'll improve and I'll be helpless no more.



Thank You to My New Family

by Tami S., Florida

I hope to make this year the best ever with the help of my fellow travelers and God, not because of what I have or will get, but who I will or may become because of God and my fellow travelers.

How I found ACA

I found out there was an ACA when the Big Red Book fell on my foot. I picked it up and it fell open to chapter four on page 68. As I bent down to pick it up, I began to read, and then I froze. No one had ever put in print what was written in my wounded soul before. I knew about other programs to deal with my insanity, but never did I hear that I could re-parent the child within from my childhood insanity. I had to find out what this book was and where I could find you! I googled ACA and a wonderful woman picked up the phone from the number provided. She told me the meeting was Sunday, January 1, 2017 – the very day after the book fell on my foot! What Divine timing.

Finding my True Self

My journey to my True Self began on that Sunday night. I met people who knew exactly what I was describing through chokes, moans, stutters, and tears. I was safe and understood. We read more from the BRB. I met my sponsor and some of the

closest friends I have ever had. Even though I had been in another program for several years, there – at the core of my being – was still a brokenness that I had been unable up to now to look at. I seemed to still be apart from people instead of a part of the people. I always felt something must be wrong with me, or I must be unlovable because I didn't fit in or feel I belonged in my family of origin. I actually thought I must be adopted and waited to be found by my "real" family. I feel in my heart that I have now found my real family.

What I learned from my True Self

You have taught me to look in the mirror and love myself. You taught me to ask my Inner Child questions and to let her speak. You showed me that we go to meetings, pick up the phone, share from the heart, and how to turn down the volume of the critical parent. You taught me how to find my voice, when before I could not admit I was angry or lonely or frightened of being abandoned. I lived a secret hell in abusive relationships or abused myself. I couldn't name the neglect, but you taught me it isn't blaming the parent or parents; it is just naming the core cause of feeling like a child in an adult body. Disassociation

was revealed in my step work. Unresolved grief is a process not conquered yet, but I know it will come.

Meditation helped me to meet my Inner Child; so far I have met seven girls of various ages and stages of life. They don't all trust me 100% yet, but two of them are coming out to play and invoke an imagination of good works.

My life today

I have hope today to put the past in the past with peace so I am free to look toward a future that is full of joy, even in my trials and challenges. I choose healthy people today who are also on a spiritual journey, so we can bring out the best in one another. I am open to learning and growing in the years to come, and I do not expect instant change. I see and hear miracles in the people I see in ACA, and I know God presides over us and He cried when that happened to you and that happened to me but we were never alone. He was with us. ACA is based on the prayers of children and now as adults in ACA, we reap the benefits of those prayers. I will continue to have a child's trust and an adult strength as I try to integrate the assets of survival into a full-fledged campaign to have a better ending than my beginning. ✨

Step Eleven

“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.”

The Body Remembers

by Jennifer K., San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico

For the world, September 11 is an anniversary of grief and loss. Even if you weren't in New York City, or don't know someone affected or killed, it is still a day that the world changed.

That fateful day

September 11th is another anniversary. One I don't share with the world. It is the anniversary of my sister, Michele's death. I am joined by the entire world for this day and often the whole week. Every year, I watch the two memorial lights shoot up into the sky and think they might be touching the spirit feet of my wandering sister. It also makes me feel lonely as my grief is drowned out by the grief of a city, a nation, a world. The week before, I often feel disjointed, depressed and sometimes inexplicably sad, and I never connect the dots until I get that call from my mom and she reminds me. I forget, but my body never does. Yesterday, mom told me she had been crying all day. What could

I say? I can't make it better. Michele was mom's first loss, she lost two children and I lost two sisters. My own heart is in pieces and even I am at a loss at what to say to her.

On grieving and feelings

I heard a story recently that suggested that there might be another way to grieve. In Dharmasala, a young traveler met a monk who had been separated from his family and didn't know if they were alive. The monk picks up the snow and remembering his family he said that snow in India and snow in Tibet are the same. The young man says something like how sorry he is that the monk is sad. The monk replies, sadness, happiness – all feelings are "same-same."

Imagine a mind that embraces all feelings as an integral part of our experience without a see-saw turbulence or a desperate need to avoid or cover up.

Finding healing

Recently on a trip to Los Angeles, I was at Washington Avenue and Pacific near the beach in Los Angeles, smiling to the Crosby, Stills and Nash song *Our House* on the radio. The ocean smell hit my nose and it is so familiar. I remember all those summer days lying basking in the attention of my sister. Suddenly, I'm thrown back to our childhood house on Loring Avenue and the song *Our House* is floating out of my sister's yellow shag carpeted room.

These thoughts rush through my head while I sit in the passenger seat of my friend's car. I say nothing, but when we get back to the house I decide to take a walk to the beach just a few feet away. I can breathe easier when I'm near the sea. I stretch out and the sand cradles me and then it hits me. I'm in it. I begin to cry and remember the song that started it all. In time it passes. And then it returns. And passes again. Just like the waves on the sea. 🌊



"I never connect the dots until I get that call from my mom and she reminds me."

Eliminating Existential Dread

by Johnny A., California

My work in ACA has helped me grow beyond the experience of existential dread.

Waking in fear

By “existential dread,” I mean the feeling I have waking in the morning, when I think, “What bad thing is going to happen today?”

As I applied my ACA tools to this experience, I realized that existential dread is a form of my inner critical parent.

This realization was a breakthrough discovery for me.

My inner critical parent is a voice that tells me: you’re not good enough to do X, Y or Z; you’ve messed up again, just like

you always mess up; you’re a loser; and so forth.

One of the miracles of doing the work

My ACA work in Chapter 8 of the BRB has helped me understand how that voice of the inner critical parent is significantly the voice from my childhood of an unsupportive and often sabotaging birth father. Using the ACA tools, I have learned that I can change that.

It’s a long story, but one of the miracles I have experienced doing this work, is understanding that I can simply ask the inner critical parent to leave.

It’s that easy.

Then, instead, I can ask my world class inner loving parent to come in and help me. (See my piece in *ComLine*, July 2017, on creating a world class inner loving parent.)

Specifically, I ask my world class inner loving parent for an intuitive thought or inspiration about how to proceed best in the next moment. If I engage this process with deep intentionality, the inner critical parent steps away, and is replaced by my world class inner loving parent.

So what about existential dread?

Just this: When I realized that my feeling of existential dread – waking in the morning wondering what bad thing is in store – was actually the voice of my inner critical parent, demeaning me; I learned that I have the option to ask that inner critical parent to leave; and to invite my world class inner loving parent to come in, instead.

The effect of this has been remarkable. I have been able to remove the feeling of existential dread from my life.

Where has this left me?

I’m not sure.

At present, I feel that I am now an infant, new born, looking at the world in wonder.

How will I grow up?

That remains to be seen.

In the meantime, I am grateful to have a family of ACA people around me, helping to nurture my infancy in a positive way; and helping me to grow.

Thank you, all.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.... 🌸



Believe In “More”

by Mike S., New York

Growing up as an Adult Child, I would not have survived had I not believed there was “more.” I hoped for more, I believed in more, and I held out for more.

How panic and fear led to addiction

Panic attacks in high school led me into a twenty year struggle with agoraphobia. Depressed, my belief in “more” was under severe attack. When I discovered alcohol, it was love at first buzz. Alcohol seemed to bring about the “more” I so desperately sought. I could sedate my phobias, meet girls, attend dances and hang out like a “normal” young adult. The “more” I found in alcohol turned out to be “less,” much less.

My struggle and pain

On September 5th, 1977 at 26 years of age, I grabbed a life preserver with the initials AA on it. I found “more” in AA’s 12 Step Program.

In Recovery I struggled with my PTSD/anxiety condition. A typical Adult Child, I became an Addictions Counselor in the middle of this struggle. We are amazing people, yes we are. In my 15th year of recovery my Sponsor of 15 years and Therapist of 13 years died. In one day the two most important people

in my life were gone in a blink. I found my way from Detroit to Akron, Ohio to the gravesite of Dr. Robert Smith, AA’s co-founder. Looking for some kind of connection, I took a dead branch and jammed my 15 year sobriety token about 18 inches down along Dr. Bob’s tombstone. I jammed my feelings of grief down much deeper. I could not handle the grief I felt, and I feared the deep well of pain rushing up from my past. I was enraged at God, but I did not drink.

Finding myself in silence

I still believed that the “more” shown to me by these loving men still existed. I sought for “more” in Grief Counselling, Couples Counselling and Bio-energetic Therapy over the next 15 years. I learned to let my grief surface in therapy sessions and meditation. I found my way through a lifetime of repressed pain. I developed a vehicle for my intense feelings. I found myself in silence, and in that silence I found myself.

A turning point

At 30 years of recovery a friend committed suicide. Living in the Hudson Valley of New York, I found my way to East Dorsett, Vermont to the

gravesite of Bill Wilson, AA’s other co-founder. I sat there on the hillside with my Golden Retrievers as the trains found their way through the valley below. This time I held back nothing, I buried nothing. I just let it flow through me.

I found the right place in ACA

I heard about ACOA in my 25 years as an Addiction Counselor. I attended meetings in the early 1990’s, but chose to work on my Inner Core (Adult Child) issues in therapy. I walked into the doors of ACA in 2007 bringing with me my experience, strength and hope. My path had paralleled the ACA path for many years. The Big Red Book was now in print, and reading the Identity Papers pamphlet and Laundry List told me I was in the right place. I had found “more” working with my “informed” therapists, but now I’ve found a fellowship that lives with “The Promises” of “more.” There are many pathways to the same destination. I often sit on what I call “The High Ridge” in deep meditation with a view of so much “more” than I ever dreamed possible. It’s so nice to be able to share that view with my fellow travelers. 

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.”

Promise Twelve

“Gradually, with our Higher Power’s help, we will learn to expect the best and get it.”

Vignettes of a Life's Journey

by Raemond W.

Separation

In my mind's eye,
I see the reflections,
in the womb's water.
The unspent dreams capsize.
The waves throw up ghosts.
Stubborn feet at my heels.
I pant and struggle to pause.
The murky waters send forth a rose,
gargling in her throat a thorn.
I must let go,
although every child still needs a
mother.

Borderland

And so it went in motion,
the roaring sound of horses,
pounding on the sands of time.
Eyes glared, nostrils flared,
wild horses hunt down the night.
Reason and thought elude.
Engrave upon my tombstone –
“A fall from my own grace”
Like a star I burned.

The Passage of Time

The dreams we have lost
staring aimlessly into the hearth,
On days gone by and days to come
to the flicker fleck of burning turf*.
As the blue hued smoke,
billows its tunnel,
along the soot-lined flue,
it hopes to escape from hades rue.
Now, no smoke remains
to choke my senses.
No nostrils flare to a sulphur touch.
Distilled now a spirit,
nothing moves but the fading hues
of blue.
A state of grace ensues!

Drive

I am driving,
along a dark highway.
The rain pours,
dropping visions on my shell.
She is whispering,
I am safe.
Outside the jesting rain,
challenges the waters to rise above.
The headlights strobe to the distance,
scuttling glass pellets to the shade.
I drive on!

Intimacy

When nights do come,
like tangled moths
in the moonlight we search.
When she looks with those eyes,
and searches my plight,
my spirit takes flight.
Afraid of the light,
but yearn to be
yet night after night,
in the moon-light we search.

Forgiveness

The naked night
in claps of thunder,
spills her rain.
The lips
take the thorn.
The leaves,
cloaked in crystal droplets,
light a different hue.
A heart moist in dew,
feels no more rue.

*Turf is a traditional source of material harvested from Irish 'bogs' which is dried and then burned as fuel in an open fire. It can be smoky, giving a blue hue.

Magnificent Minsk – 2nd Annual ACA Summer Fest

by Jeffrey F., European Committee

On July 29, 2017, the ACA fellowship in Belarus came together for its 2nd Annual ACA Summer Fest. (Belarus, a former Soviet republic, is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe, bordered by Russia in northeast, Ukraine in south, Poland in west, by Lithuania and Latvia to the northwest.)

The topic of the ACA event was Becoming your Own Loving Parent. Besides attendees from Belarus, others also came from Russia and the Czech Republic. More than 80 people registered, including five newcomers.

For the grand opening, ACA members from other countries were invited to speak about their ACA groups and group histories. Belarusian Intergroup Chair Jury spoke about intergroup activities, their progress and services they are offering as an intergroup. During the second half of the program, speakers included myself, Jeffrey F., Prague; Zhanna K., Minsk; and Alexandr and Nastya from Moscow. We spoke on the topics of Inner Child, Inner Critical Parent, and the Loving Parent. At the close of the event, everyone had the opportunity to speak about themselves, their emotions, and what they felt. Since the Belarussian fellowship did not have their Big Red Book (BRB)

yet and the Russian edition is coming out soon, I shared what the BRB had to say on this topic in Chapter 8.

I also talked about the definitions for the Inner Child, False Self, Loving Inner Parent, and Critical Inner Parent. Then I included main points of a Loving Parent, which also means learning to reparent ourselves. We re-parent ourselves by recognizing we all have love inside of us.

We were born this way. And we need to find that voice of love inside of us. It is important to remember to develop your loving parent first, before doing any Inner Child work. Your inner child usually does not emerge until there is a loving parent. So don't rush this.

Some of the other points I spoke about were on the Inner Child – or your True Self. Inner Child work is best done when we are comfortable with affirmations and have spent time getting to know and developing our own Loving Parent within us. Our Inner Child understands “feelings” and the language of our Higher Power. This occurs during our spiritual experiences and is important for our spiritual awakening. Our Inner Child believes in people and freely gives love and trust without effort. But as a result of abuse, our Inner Child became angry and behaved in a self-destructive manner. Luckily, our hurt or angry Inner Child will listen if we take the time to build trust and intimacy.

I ended my sharing with the main points of the Critical Inner Parent. All adult children arrive at ACA with critical messages in our minds that judge ourselves and others. This is the Critical Inner Parent who blames,



belittles and judges us and others. Our Critical Inner Parent seems so natural to some of us that it can take time to identify what the Critical Inner Parent is doing, and to challenge the thoughts we are thinking, in order to eventually stop them. After identifying our Critical Inner Parent, we need to start turning them down, so we can stop them in order to begin deleting these old messages. But remember, it took us years to develop these traits so we will not change or get rid of them in a few weeks or months.

As an ACA World Service Organization (WSO) Trustee, I am so grateful for the service I can provide to other European countries. It is an honor and a privilege to be a part of this family and to talk to others about the incredible healing ACA can offer if we just do the work. Thank you, everyone, for all you do in ACA!

Due to limited space this report has been greatly reduced. To read the full report visit the European Committee web page at: <http://acawsoec.com/belarus/>. The full report also reveals the mystery of the Inner Child Delight (pictured at left) as well as many local insights about Minsk you won't want to miss. ✨





ACA WSO, Inc.
1458 East 33rd Street
Signal Hill, California,
90755 USA
adultchildren.org
adultchildren.org/comline