



## Leader Reading Notes:

- Face to face sentences are noted with a ♥ before the reading.
- Online/phone statements are highlighted in gray.
- Select documents when using screen sharing.
- Announce how to mute and unmute several times during the meeting.
- *(Italicized and in parenthesis sentences) are not read out loud for all meetings.)*
- Reading Option 1: The group may go around the room and read a couple of paragraphs of the script and pass. If a member chooses not to read say pass, or
- Reading Option 2: Use the Service Sheets found in Appendix D to have volunteers sign up to do a reading.

*(The host may ask for a co host.)*

*(The host will be the leader for week one of Ready Set GO!!)*

**READ THE READY SET GO!! MESSAGE BEFORE THE START OF THE MEETING.**

## Leader

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am an adult child.

Welcome to week one of a Ready Set GO!! Introductory Meeting, which will introduce the ACA program and Steps 1, 2, and 3.

Will all who care to, please join me in the Serenity Prayer however you choose?

*(god, higher power, life, universe, etc)*\_\_\_\_\_ grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

♥ Let's go around and introduce ourselves. I'll go first. Hi my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm an adult child.

Please raise your virtual hand to introduce yourself with first name, where you are from. Newcomers please go first. (5 mins)

## Leader

Ready Set GO!! is an introductory program. Newcomers and experienced members engage in closed face to face or online/phone meetings to gain clarity and understanding of the ACA program and the ACA 12 Steps, and become acquainted with their inner child. Members may use Ready Set GO!! (RSG) in preparation for working the ACA 12 Step Workbook when they are ready to do so. We recognize all our 12 Traditions to ensure safety within the group.

Feel free to leave your fears and anxieties behind you as you experience these introductory meetings.

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

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

For each step, a worksheet is provided that may bring more clarity and understanding. We will set aside a few minutes to fill in the worksheets and to answer any brief questions. Appendix B will provide a complete version of the worksheets.

There is no right or wrong way to do the worksheets. They can be done over time as we grow and heal.

Choosing a sharing partner from this group who has some ACA experience is suggested for support during the six weeks. Sharing the worksheets with a sharing partner, sponsor, fellow traveler, or someone from this group is recommended, when you feel comfortable. This experience with a sharing partner can give the adult child insight into choosing a sponsor.

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

♥ Who would like to read The Laundry List Traits? (BRB p. 587-588) (*RSG, pp. ?*)

♥ Who would like to read The Solution? (BRB p. 590) (*RSG, pp. ?*)

\_\_\_\_\_ Please read The Laundry List Traits. (BRB p. 587-588) (*RSG, pp. ?*)

\_\_\_\_\_ Please read The Solution. (BRB p. 590) (*RSG, pp. ?*)

## Leader

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

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

I will read a passage from Strengthening My Recovery related to the Introduction: “On this day I will remember that what I learn through ACA and the Steps is not just for me. My program can affect everyone whose life I touch.” (SMR, p. 139)

We will begin with an introduction to the ACA program. The introduction of Steps 1, 2, and 3 helps us to begin building the spiritual foundation that the ACA program offers us.

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

♥ We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs, and then pass. Who will begin reading through Family Types That Can Create Adult Children.

Please begin reading The Introduction through Characteristics.

Member

## Introduction

### *The Six Suggestions for Ongoing Recovery*

While ACA members avoid giving advice, we can share our recovery experience. These six suggestions for 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 Red Book”. Give yourself a break and read it.
5. Get telephone numbers. Don’t isolate.
6. Get a Higher Power. (BRB, p.571)

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 that connecting with our feelings and Inner Child are just as important as working the Twelve Steps and sponsorship. We confront our inner Critical Parent and allow our Loving Parent to emerge. With our Loving Parent guiding us, we remove ourselves from codependent relationships and stop harming ourselves. We seek help for our addictions if we are acting out with drugs, sex, food, spending, gambling, or another compulsive behavior. We learn that we can recover from trauma and neglect.

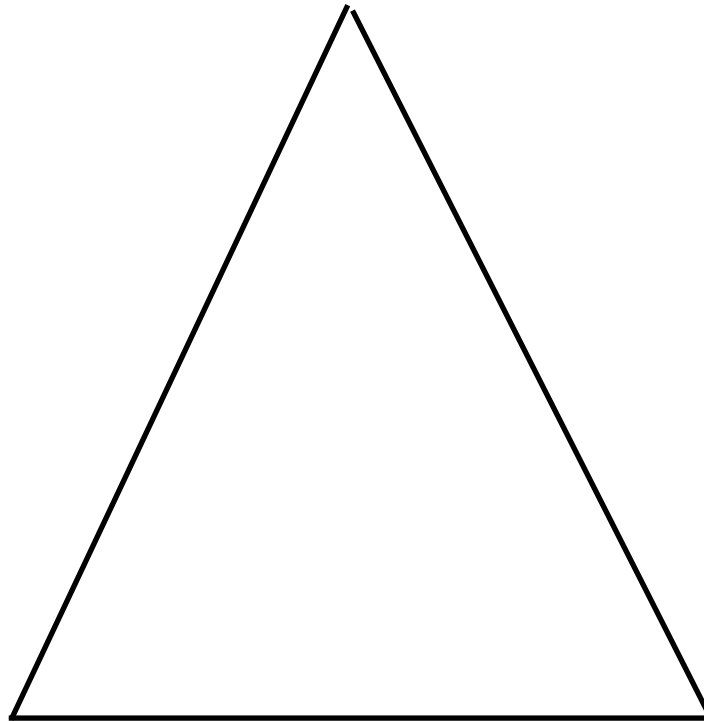
Welcome to ACA and the journey.  
(BRB, p.558)

# ACA Disease Model

**Adult Child**

*PTSD*  
*Stored Trauma*  
*Neglect*

**BODY**



**MIND**  
*14 Traits*  
*Laundry Traits*

**SPIRIT**  
*Hidden*  
*Inner Child*

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

***Prediction factor:***

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

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

*(BRB, p. xxvi)*

### ***Step Study Meetings***

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. (BRB, p.568)

### ***A Feeling and 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. (BRB, p. 358)

### ***Characteristics***

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. (BRB, p. 93)

We find that a difference in identity and purpose distinguishes ACA 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.

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. (BRB, p. 81-82)

## Leader

♥ Please continue reading by going around the room, read a couple of paragraphs and then pass. We will continue reading through Family Types That Can Create Adult Children.

Please continue reading through Family Types That Can Create Adult Children.

## Member

### 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. (BRB, p. 82)

**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. (BRB, p. 93)

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. (BRB, p. 387)

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.

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.

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 repent ourselves during this process as well.

In **Steps Ten through Twelve**, having now begun the process of recovery, we will learn how to make the Steps a part of our daily lives. We will continue to take personal inventory, learning more about ourselves as we grow. We will seek to improve our contact with our Higher Power through prayer and meditation. We seek to learn God's will for us, and we ask for the power to carry that out. Finally, **Step Twelve**, having experienced a spiritual awakening, we learn to practice these principles in all our affairs and to carry the message to those who still suffer. If we wish to keep what we have gained, we must learn to give it away, where and whenever we can. We must get out of ourselves. We insist on enjoying life and being a part of life. (BRB, pp. 568-569)



## Family Types That Can Create Adult Children



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. (BRB, p. 58)

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. (BRB, p.57-58)



## Leader

Are there any brief questions about the worksheet or what we have read?

♥ Before we break into our small groups, we will read the small group sharing guidelines for the safety of the groups. We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs, and then pass. Who will begin reading.

Before we break into our groups of four, \_\_\_\_\_ please read the small group sharing guidelines for the safety of the groups. (*Leader prepare rooms*)

## Member

We are providing these guidelines to help everyone maintain the spiritual, unified, supportive and loving atmosphere of ACA meetings. We thank you for your service in participating as you choose, when you choose, and respecting others' choices to do the same. Following these guidelines will help each small group run smoothly, and with care for all.

- Each member will introduce themselves with their first name when and if they choose to share. They may follow their name with "I am an adult child," if they choose.
- If someone chooses not to share, they may offer their first name and say, "Pass."
- Each group needs a timekeeper, to ensure time for all to share. Any group member can provide this service.
- Our sharing time is 15 minutes, with three minute shares for each person. If you would like a one minute warning, please ask the timekeeper. At the end of three minutes, the timekeeper can announce "Time." Please end or briefly wrap up your share when you hear "Time."
- Share on anything read in the last section, and/or whatever is on your heart. Remember to focus on ACA recovery.
- Share your experiences only, by using "I" statements to focus on yourself. For example:
  - What brought me to this ACA meeting today?
  - What I heard in the readings that really struck me.
  - What I heard in the readings that I could relate to.
  - What I experienced with a worksheet.
- Each member shares responsibility for keeping their small group safe. Be courteous, and attentive as best you can, to allow others to share the experience, strength and hope that holds true for them.
- We do not cross talk during shares. Cross talk means interrupting, referring to, or commenting on another person's share. We do not cross talk, because adult children come from family backgrounds where feelings and perceptions were judged as wrong or defective. We accept without comment what others say because it is true for them. We work toward taking more responsibility in our lives rather than giving advice to others.

- Each group is invited to say the The Serenity Prayer before any sharing, however they may choose.
- We ask that each person here refrains from any language and behaviors that threatens the well-being of any of our members. Together, we will have a welcoming, safe, respectful, and inclusive meeting place for all our members.
- For any reason if you feel you need to leave your small group before the 15 minutes are up, feel free to come back to the main room.

## Leader

Welcome back. *(May take a 3 minute break)*

We will go on to Step One

In Step One, we will become aware that we are powerless over the effects of the disease of family dysfunction--that our lives are unmanageable.

I will read a passage from Strengthening My Recovery which is related to Step 1: "On this day I see wonderful things happening in my life as I loosen my grip. . and let go." (SMR. p. 4)

Please do not rush through the readings, so that we can absorb the material.

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Please begin reading Step One.

## Member

### The ACA Twelve Steps

#### Step One

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

#### Spiritual Principles: Powerlessness and Surrender

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

With Step One we come out of denial and talk about what happened. We bring details to light. (BRB, p. 96)

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

Families without alcoholism have similar situations. These families abuse the children through the use of intellect, manipulation, or silence. We know our truth. (BRB, p. 97)

The roles which are usually present in alcoholic and dysfunctional homes include “family hero, lost child, scapegoat, and mascot. (BRB, p. 97)

. . .many adult children realize they have absorbed generational shame, abandonment, and rage only to grow up and recreate similar families or relationships. (BRB, p. 98)

. . .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. (BRB, p. 99)

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. (BRB, p. 99)

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. (BRB, p. 102)

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. (BRB, p. 103)

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 learn 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.

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. (BRB, p. 104)

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”. (BRB, p. 123)

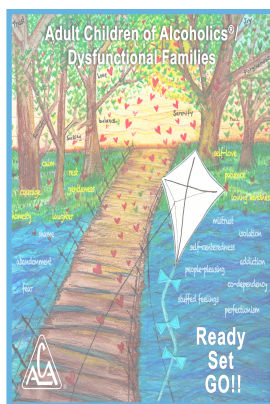
...Surrender means we become willing to do whatever it takes to recover and find peace and serenity in our lives. We admit complete defeat and give up notions that we can “fix” or control someone else. We become willing to attend meetings, work the Twelve Steps, and break through the denial of family dysfunction. (BRB, p. 124)

...With feelings, respect, trust, and honesty we no longer confuse love and pity.. (BRB, p. 405)

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. (BRB, p. 155)

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. (BRB, p. 201)

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. (BRB, p. 125)



## FAMILY MEMBER LABELS WORKSHEET B1

Think about your experiences or what you have heard about relatives in connection with addiction, religion, relationships, food, sex, work, etc. . . . The labels for your family members can include one or a combination of labels. (BRB. pp. 127-128)

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

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

## Leader

On the following page you will find the Step One Worksheet, Powerlessness / Unmanageability / Surrender Process.

Full blank worksheets are in Appendix B2.

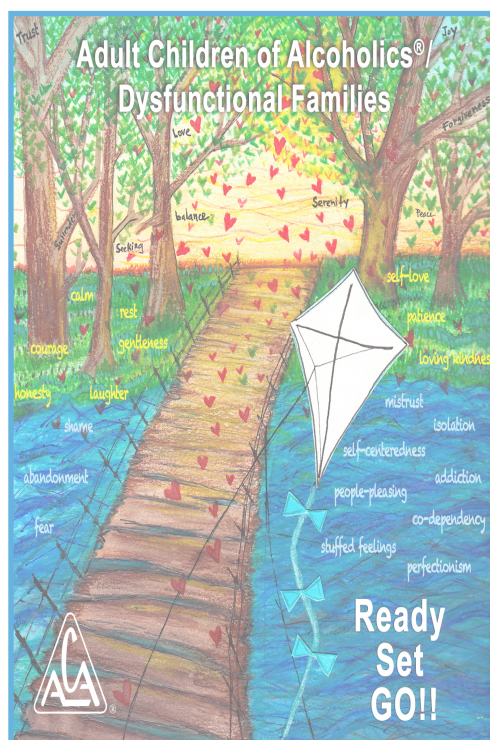
I will read the following worksheet.

You will have 3 minutes to fill it in, to the best of your ability.

Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner, if needed.

*(The Leader may choose to play "Awakening My Little One" softly in the background during the time given for members to fill in the worksheet.)*

*(Alert the timekeeper)*





## Step One Worksheet B2

### POWERLESSNESS / UNMANAGEABILITY / SURRENDER PROCESS

#### Effects of Powerlessness

(examples: denial, shame, hopelessness, frustration, confusion, worthlessness, feeling lost or stuck)

---

---

---

#### Situations of Unmanageability

(examples: relationships, parenting, worrying, money, organizing)

---

---

---

---

#### Gain Surrender By

(examples: willing to attend ACA meetings, study ACA Twelve Steps, get a sponsor, consider a therapist)

---

---

---

---

**Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step One.**

We will go on to Step Two.

In Step Two, we will come to an acceptance of the fact that only a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity.

I will read a passage from Strengthening My Recovery which relates to Step Two: “On this day I will have faith in a power greater than myself. I will give myself permission to explore what that is for me, no matter what it looks like for others.” (SMR, p. 36)

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Please begin reading Step Two.

Member

**Step Two**

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

***Spiritual Principles: Open-mindedness and Clarity***

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

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. (BRB, pp.106-107)

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. (BRB, p. 137)

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.

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. (BRB, p.107)

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”. (BRB, p.135)

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. (BRB, p. 137)

## Leader

On the following page you will find the Step Two Worksheet, Seeking A Higher Power.

Full blank worksheets are in Appendix **B3**.

I will read the following worksheet.

You will have 3 minutes to fill it in, to the best of your ability.

Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner, if needed.

*(The Leader may choose to play “Awakening My Little One” softly in the background during the time given for members to fill in the worksheet.) (Alert the timekeeper)*



## **Step Two Worksheet Seeking a Higher Power B3**

### *BELIEFS AND WAYS TO SEEK A HIGHER POWER*

#### **Childhood Beliefs about a Higher Power**

---

---

---

---

#### **Adult Beliefs about a Higher Power**

---

---

---

---

#### **Ways to Seek a Higher Power**

---

---

---

---

***Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Two.***

We will go on to Step Three.

In Step Three we make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care and guidance of a God of our understanding. We might choose to see this higher power as a loving parent who cares for us.

I will read a passage from Strengthening My Recovery which relates to Step Three: “On this day I will accept the challenges that are placed before me, knowing that I have both the support of my fellow travelers in the program and my Higher Power, who is ever present.” (SMR, p. 66)

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Please begin reading Step Three.

Member

### **Step Three**

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

### **Spiritual Principles: Willingness and Accepting Help**

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

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.

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 come to believe that God hears our prayers. We are less confused on what to pray about. We begin to have true choice. (BRB, pp. 107-108)

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 the 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 a daily basis. 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. (BRB, p. 142)

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.

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

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 caregiver. We know 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. (BRB, p. 143-144)

This Step is a bottomless well of hope, which is needed to deal with our fear-based attempts to control ourselves and others. As we work the remainder of the Twelve Steps, we will invariably struggle with control and self-doubt. Such struggles are only natural since we relied on controlling our feelings and emotions to survive in our home and relationships. Control meant a sense of safety and predictability; however, we surrendered much of 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.

Each time we encounter the cliff face of control and feel overwhelmed by steep walls, we must remember we can draw on an endless well of God's grace. The Third Step, coupled with our association with other recovering adult children, is an endless resource of hope and reassurance. We can tap it indefinitely, one day at a time. (BRB, pp. 145-146)

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. (BRB, pp. 155-156 )

***ACA Third Step Prayer (group may recite together)***

*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* (BRB, p.149 )

**Leader**

The Step 3 Worksheet - Understanding our Higher Power of Our Choice, is on the following page.

Full blank worksheets are in Appendix B4.

I will read the following worksheet. You will have 3 minutes to fill it in, to the best of your ability

*Thoroughly complete the worksheet at home with the support of your sharing partner, if needed. (The Leader may choose to play "Awakening My Little One" softly in the background during the time given for members to fill in the worksheet.) (Alert the timekeeper)*



## Step Three Worksheet B4

### Understanding our Higher Power of Our Choice

#### What I want my Higher Power to be

*(examples: a loving relationship, nurturing, caring, supportive, kind, always present):*

---

---

---

---

#### How do I become willing to trust my Higher Power

*(examples: By totally surrendering my will, facing my denial, forsaking my need to control, learning how to pray, learning how to ask for help):*

---

---

---

---

#### Things to turn over to my Higher Power

*(examples: The Laundry List Traits, character defects, fears and anxieties):*

---

---

---

---

***Congratulations! You have been introduced to Step Three.***

Are there any brief questions about the worksheet or what we have read?

♥ Before we break into our small groups, we will read the small group sharing guidelines for the safety of the groups. We will go around the room, read a couple of paragraphs, and then pass. Who will begin reading.?

Before we break into our groups of four, \_\_\_\_\_ please read the small group sharing guidelines for the safety of the groups. *(Leader prepare rooms)*

We are providing these guidelines to help everyone maintain the spiritual, unified, supportive and loving atmosphere of ACA meetings. We thank you for your service in participating as you choose, when you choose, and respecting others' choices to do the same. Following these guidelines will help each small group run smoothly, and with care for all.

- Each member will introduce themselves with their first name when and if they choose to share. They may follow their name with "I am an adult child," if they choose.
- If someone chooses not to share, they may offer their first name and say, "Pass."
- Each group needs a timekeeper, to ensure time for all to share. Any group member can provide this service.
- Our sharing time is 15 minutes, with three minute shares for each person. If you would like a one minute warning, please ask the timekeeper. At the end of three minutes, the timekeeper can announce "Time." Please end or briefly wrap up your share when you hear "Time."
- Share on anything read in the last section, and/or whatever is on your heart. Remember to focus on ACA recovery.
- Share your experiences only, by using "I" statements to focus on yourself. For example:
  - What brought me to this ACA meeting today?
  - What I heard in the readings that really struck me.
  - What I heard in the readings that I could relate to.
  - What I experienced with a worksheet.
- Each member shares responsibility for keeping their small group safe. Be courteous, and attentive as best you can, to allow others to share the experience, strength and hope that holds true for them.
- We do not cross talk during shares. Cross talk means interrupting, referring to, or commenting on another person's share. We do not cross talk, because adult children come from family backgrounds where feelings and perceptions were judged as wrong or defective. We accept without

- comment what others say because it is true for them. We work toward taking more responsibility in our lives rather than giving advice to others
- Each group is invited to say the The Serenity Prayer before any sharing, however they may choose.
- We ask that each person here refrains from any language and behaviors that threatens the well-being of any of our members. Together, we will have a welcoming, safe, respectful, and inclusive meeting place for all our members.
- For any reason if you feel you need to leave your small group before the 15 minutes are up, feel free to come back to the main room.

## Leader

Welcome back.

We will continue with wrapping up our first week of RSG.

♥ In accordance with the 7th Tradition, which states that each group will be self-supporting, we will pass a basket for donations.

In accordance with the 7th Tradition WSO: <https://adultchildren.org/7th-tradition/online-contribution/> donating would greatly support literature and publishing for Ready Set GO!! and please also consider our sponsoring Intergroup IG #70, go to [westgreatlakesaca.org](http://westgreatlakesaca.org)

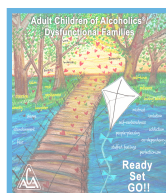
Thank you for participating in our one week of Ready Set GO!! which introduced the introduction of ACA, and Steps 1, 2, and 3.

Thanks to our readers and our timekeeper.

Next week we will introduce Steps 4 and 5.

Who would like to be the leader for Week Two?

Please read The Laundry List Traits, The Solution, The 12 Steps, The 12 Traditions, and The Promises on the day of our next meeting.





*(Optional: Ask members to email the leader a baby/child picture for a special remembrance of RSG presentation before the last week of RSG and/or bring their childhood picture the last week of RSG.)*

After our Closing Prayer, we will discuss sharing partners, have a question and answer session, and join in fellowship.

Will you please join me for our Closing Prayer, Gathered Together?  
*(Leader may read or ask a member to read.)*

### **Gathered Together**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Keep Coming Back!! It works if you work It and You are Worth It!

### **Leader**

We suggest that you read the following affirmations and slogans on your own.

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

#### **ACA Step One Affirmations**

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 Twelve Steps Workbook, p. 42)*

#### **ACA Step Two Affirmations**

By attending ACA meetings and working with my sponsor, I am being restored to clarity and sanity.

I am understanding the effects of addiction and family dysfunction in my adult life today

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

I am not unique.

I am not alone. (ACA Twelve Steps Workbook, p. 56)

### **Step Three Affirmations: Let Go. Let God.**

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.

(ACA Twelve Steps Workbook, p.69)

### **Affirmations for Sponsees**

(These can also apply to the Sponsor)

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 the willingness to do whatever it takes to recover.

I am following the suggestions of my sponsor in my path of recovery. (BRB, p.386)

### **Program Slogans that Work**

ACA is Simple but it is Not Easy

Live Beyond Mere Survival

There is Another Way to Live

One Day at a Time

Easy Does It

Keep it Simple

Progress Not Perfection

First Things First

This Pain Too Shall Pass

Let Go. Let God

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

Keep Coming Back

Name It, Don't Blame It

Ask For Help and Accept It

Pray and Pray Hard

Don't Just Do Something. Sit There

Be Still and Know

There is no Healing Without Feeling (BRB, p. 52)

**ACA READY SET GO!!**  
**SHARING PARTNER/OUTREACH**  
**SIGNUP LIST GUIDELINES C1**

*Using Chat*

*(Leader may ask a volunteer to do the List)*

**SHARING PARTNER (SP):** A sharing partner is a participant from our ACA RSG group with some ACA experience who volunteers to support a participant through the five or six weeks of Ready Set GO!!. A **sharing partner** is only suggested not required to complete RSG.

It is the responsibility of a participant to contact a **sharing partner** from the list if they choose to have a **sharing partner** who they may feel comfortable and safe with emotionally and spiritually.

**SIGNUP FOR RSG ONLINE:** Enter name, **SP**, phone number, time zone, time in ACA and email as a sharing partner. C1

**SIGNUP FOR DIAL IN/PHONE:** Email the RSG leader your name, **SP**, phone number, time zone, time in ACA and email to be placed on the List as a sharing partner. C1

**OUTREACH (OR) :** Offers a participant the ability to connect with other adult children from our RSG group for as long as they choose.

**SIGNUP FOR RSG ONLINE:** Enter name, phone number, time zone, time in ACA and email in the chat.C1

**SIGNUP FOR DIAL IN/PHONE:** Email the RSG leader with name, phone number, time zone, time in ACA and email. C1

**SIGNUP FOR FACE TO FACE MEETINGS: In Appendix.C2**

=====

**AFTER THE CLOSING OF THE FIRST MEETING SIGNUP TO BE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

**SIGNUP TO BE A SHARING PARTNER: ENTER IN THE CHAT:**

Name, **SP**, if you choose to be a sharing partner,  
phone number, time zone, time in ACA and email  
to be placed on the list as a sharing partner

**SIGNUP TO BE ON THE OUTREACH LIST ONLY:**

**ENTER IN THE CHAT:**

Name, phone number, time zone, time in ACA and email.

**TO RECEIVE THE LIST ONLY: ENTER IN THE CHAT:** Name, email, list only.

**Please keep the list confidential.**  
**ACA READY SET GO!!**  
**SHARING PARTNER/OUTREACH SIGN**  
**UP LIST GUIDELINES**  
*Using Google Forms c2a*

**FOR RSG ONLINE MEETINGS:**

A link will be provided at each of your RSG meetings for six weeks where a member will fill in a form to sign up for the **SHARING PARTNER/OUTREACH LIST**.

**SHARING PARTNER (SP):**

A sharing partner is a member from our RSG group with some ACA experience who volunteers to support a member through the six weeks of RSG.

It is the responsibility of a member to contact a **sharing partner** from the list if they choose to have a **sharing partner** who they may feel comfortable and safe with emotionally and spiritually.

A **sharing partner** is only suggested but not required to complete RSG.

**OUTREACH (OR):**

Offers a member the ability to make a connection with other adult children from their RSG group for as long as they choose.

*A member may choose to sign up for both SP and OR.*

**FOR RSG PHONE/DIAL IN MEETINGS:**

Members who want to be on the List need to email the RSG leader to receive the link to sign up.

*The list is also available for those who just want the list.*

**FOR FACE TO FACE MEETINGS:** In Appendix. C1

**Please keep the list CONFIDENTIAL.**

**DO NOT MERGE OR SHARE THIS LIST WITH OTHER LISTS,  
SUCH AS WHATSAPP, FACEBOOK, OR ANY OTHER LISTS THAT MAY BE OUT THERE.**