

**Welcome** to the Early Risers (ER) Fellow World Travelers English-speaking group of ACA.

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ an ACA and today's chair. This is an audio-only meeting with a focus on reparenting and lasts for 75 minutes.

**Preamble:**

ACA is a spiritual program supporting people who grew up with family dysfunction. That experience infected us then and it affects us today. While our members may be from homes where alcohol or drugs were present, it is not a requirement. People who suffered abuse, neglect or unhealthy behaviour are also members.

As ACA members, we identify with The Laundry List traits.

By practicing the Twelve Steps and by attending meetings regularly, we find freedom from the effects of alcoholism or other family dysfunction and work on transforming The Laundry List traits into usable tools for our personal growth. We learn to live in The Solution of reparenting ourselves, one day at a time.

**Loving Parent Prayer:** Please join me in a few moments of silence followed by Prayer number \_\_\_\_\_.

<p><b><u>Number 1</u></b> Dear Loving Parent, I recognize you, and I am depending on you to help me be gentler with myself and more accepting of myself. Please challenge me to try if I am apathetic, but also help me give myself a break if I judge myself too harshly. Help me focus on progress rather than perfection. Thank you.</p>	<p><b><u>Number 2</u></b> Higher Power, help me to be willing to recognize the Loving Parent inside of me. Help me integrate my Inner Child more actively into my daily life so that I remain awake spiritually. Grant me the courage to change the things I can. Grant me the wisdom of my Inner Child. Thank you.</p>	<p><b><u>Number 3</u></b> Higher Power, help me to become my own Loving Parent and help me with the healing from my traumatic childhood. Teach me how to be a Loving Parent to myself. Guide me to the child within. Thank you.</p>
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## Opening Readings

Would someone like to read **Loving Parent or Reparenting?**

What is a Loving Parent or Reparenting? What does it mean to become Your Own Loving Parent?

Most people arrive at ACA with a critical inner voice. Some of us call this voice a Critical Parent. By becoming our own Loving Parent, we begin to take better care of ourselves. By learning the true qualities of a Loving Parent or reparenting, we recognize that the care we received from our biological parents was not healthy love. By reparenting ourselves, we accept that we have positive qualities. We stop the critical self-talk through affirmations and journaling. We learn to parent ourselves with a more loving voice inside. We realize we have something to offer to our ACA support group and to society.

The Loving Parent is the inner parent we can develop from the part of us that took action to care for ourselves as children and can be awakened in recovery. The first step in reparenting ourselves involves recognizing the loving voice inside. Our experience shows that every adult child has love inside, regardless of what the person says or believes. Love is there and it is original.

## (Chair/Host Reads) **Reparenting Ourselves**

The need to reparent ourselves comes from our efforts to feel safe as children. The violent nature of alcoholism and dysfunction darkened our emotional world and left us wounded, hurt, and unable to feel. This extreme alienation from our own internal direction kept us helplessly dependent on those we mistrusted and feared. In an unstable, hostile, and often dangerous environment, we attempted to meet the impossible demands of living with family alcoholism and dysfunction, and our lives were soon out of control.

To make sense of the confusion and to end our feelings of fear, we denied inconsistencies in what we were taught. We held rigidly to a few certain beliefs, or we rebelled and distrusted all outside interference. Freedom begins with being open to love. The dilemma of abandonment is a choice between painful intimacy and hopeless isolation, but the consequence is the same. We protect ourselves by rejecting the vulnerable inner child and are forced to live without warmth or love.

Without love, intimacy and isolation are equally painful, empty, and incomplete. Love dissolves hate. We give ourselves the love we seek by releasing our self-hatred and embracing the child inside. With a child's sensitivity we reach out to explore the world again and become aware of the need to trust and love others. The warm affection we have for each other heals our inner hurt. ACA's loving acceptance and gentle support lessen our feelings of fear. We share our beliefs and mistrust without judgment or criticism. We realize the insanity of alcoholism and dysfunction and become willing to replace the confusing beliefs of childhood with the clear, consistent direction of the Twelve Steps and Traditions, and to accept the authority of the loving God they reflect.

### Would someone like to read **The Laundry List** (All or perhaps just a few items each)

1. We became isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.
2. We became approval seekers and lost our identity in the process.
3. We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.
4. We either become alcoholics, marry them or both, or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfil our sick abandonment needs.
5. We live life from the viewpoint of victims and we are attracted by that weakness in our love and friendship relationships.
6. We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and it is easier for us to be concerned with others rather than ourselves; this enables us not to look too closely at our own faults, etc.
7. We get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.
8. We became addicted to excitement.
9. We confuse love and pity and tend to "love" people we can "pity" and "rescue."
10. We have "stuffed" our feelings from our traumatic childhoods and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts so much (Denial).
11. We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem.
12. We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment and will do anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to experience painful abandonment feelings, which we received from living with sick people who were never there emotionally for us.
13. Alcoholism is a family disease; and we became para-alcoholics and took on the characteristics of that disease even though we did not pick up the drink.
14. Para-alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.

Would someone like to read [The Other Laundry List](#) (All or perhaps just a few items each)

1. To cover our fear of people and our dread of isolation we tragically become the very authority figures who frighten others and cause them to withdraw.
2. To avoid becoming enmeshed and entangled with other people and losing ourselves in the process, we become rigidly self-sufficient. We disdain the approval of others.
3. We frighten people with our anger and threat of belittling criticism.
4. We dominate others and abandon them before they can abandon us or we avoid relationships with dependent people altogether. To avoid being hurt, we isolate and dissociate and thereby abandon ourselves.
5. We live life from the standpoint of a victimizer, and are attracted to people we can manipulate and control in our important relationships.
6. We are irresponsible and self-centred. Our inflated sense of self-worth and self-importance prevents us from seeing our deficiencies and shortcomings.
7. We make others feel guilty when they attempt to assert themselves.
8. We inhibit our fear by staying deadened and numb.
9. We hate people who “play” the victim and beg to be rescued.
10. We deny that we’ve been hurt and are suppressing our emotions by the dramatic expression of “pseudo” feelings.
11. To protect ourselves from self-punishment for failing to “save” the family we project our self-hate onto others and punish them instead.
12. We “manage” the massive amount of deprivation we feel, coming from abandonment within the home, by quickly letting go of relationships that threaten our “independence” (not too close).
13. We refuse to admit we’ve been affected by family dysfunction or that there was dysfunction in the home or that we have internalized any of the family’s destructive attitudes and behaviours.
14. We act as if we are nothing like the dependent people who raised us.

Would someone like to read [The Solution](#) (All or a couple of paragraphs and pass it on to someone else?)

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

The healing begins when we risk moving out of isolation. Feelings and buried memories will return. By gradually releasing the burden of unexpressed grief, we slowly move out of the past. We learn to re-parent ourselves with gentleness, humour, love and respect.

This process allows us to see our biological parents as the instruments of our existence. Our actual parent is a Higher Power whom some of us choose to call God. Although we had alcoholic or dysfunctional parents, our Higher Power gave us the Twelve Steps of Recovery. This is the action and work that heals us: we use the Steps; we use the meetings; we use the telephone. We share our experience, strength, and hope with each other. We learn to restructure our sick thinking one day at a time. When we release our parents from responsibility for our actions today, we become free to make healthful decisions as actors, not reactors. We progress from hurting, to healing, to helping. We awaken to a sense of wholeness we never knew was possible.

By attending these meetings on a regular basis, you will come to see parental alcoholism or family dysfunction for what it is: a disease that infected you as a child and continues to affect you as an adult. You will learn to keep the focus on yourself in the here and now. You will take responsibility for your own life and supply your own parenting.

You will not do this alone. Look around you and you will see others who know how you feel. We will love and encourage you no matter what. We ask you to accept us just as we accept you. This is a spiritual program based on action coming from love. We are sure that as the love grows inside you, you will see beautiful changes in all your relationships, especially with God, yourself, and your parents.

Would someone like to read [The Twelve Steps](#) (All or perhaps just a few items each)

1. We admitted we were powerless over the effects of alcoholism or other family dysfunction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Would someone like to read our [Loving Parent or Reparenting reading](#) (All or a couple of paragraphs)

As we awaken the Loving Parent inside, we remember a simple slogan: "First Things First." Many adult children rush into Inner Child work without taking time to meet their inner, caring parents. As a result, some of us will struggle with finding the Inner Child until we take this necessary step. The Inner Child will not usually emerge until we establish our Loving Parent. In some cases, a sabotaging aspect of the Inner Child will emerge if we rush this phase of our recovery. This angry aspect of the Inner Child can overpower the newly developing Loving Parent and delay recovery.

We awaken the Loving Parent inside by actively listening to what we tell ourselves about ourselves. We stop in mid-sentence if we are putting ourselves down or criticizing our thoughts or behaviours. We identify the source of the negativity which is the inner critic inside all adult children. We face this critical voice with affirmations that state who we truly are. Through reparenting ourselves, we reframe our mistakes as chances to learn or grow emotionally. This is a sign of becoming our own Loving Parent.

Another way in which we can become our own Loving Parent is to realize that we will not recover overnight. ACA recovery takes time. Even when we attend meetings, work the Steps, and use the telephone, we can still struggle at times. ACA is simple, but it takes a balanced effort and patience at times to make it through. We can do everything right and still wonder if we are making progress. A Loving Parent inside reminds us that we are good enough and that we are making progress.

In ACA we become willing to apply what we learn in the program to our daily lives and to relationships. We must be willing to apply the principles of the Steps and to reparent ourselves if we want to change.

Our principles of the Steps are:

- Step 1: Powerlessness and Surrender
- Step 2: Open Mindedness and Clarity
- Step 3: Willingness and Accepting Help
- Step 4: Self-honesty and Courage
- Step 5: Honesty and Trust
- Step 6: Willingness
- Step 7: Humility
- Step 8: Willingness and Self-forgiveness
- Step 9: Forgiveness and Courage
- Step 10: Honesty and Discernment
- Step 11: Seeking and Listening
- Step 12: Love and Self-love

By reparenting ourselves, we can further remove the "buttons" that have been pushed by others to manipulate us or to get a reaction out of us. Through a Loving Parent inside, we gain greater independence from codependence. We find the skills to support our need to become independent people. We intuitively know what we need and what we can live without. We will learn to act as an actor to people, places, things and circumstances. We learn to truly see, listen and understand the present moment, the point between past and future. We learn to live and let live.

**Introductions:** Thank you all for being here today. You may have related to our readings even if there was no apparent addiction in your home. This is common because dysfunction can occur in a family without the presence of addiction. Feel free to leave your fears and anxieties behind you. Let's go around the meeting and introduce ourselves and say where we're calling from. If you are new to this meeting or a newcomer to ACA today, would you please also introduce yourself? I will start. Hi I am \_\_\_\_\_ ACA and I am from \_\_\_\_\_

**Welcome Everyone.** If you are joining us for the first time and/or are new to ACA, we are glad you are here. By attending six meetings in a row and attending regularly thereafter, we come to know and begin to act as our Authentic Selves. ACA provides a safe, non-judgmental environment that allows us to grieve our childhoods and to conduct an honest inventory of ourselves and our families. By identifying with the 'Laundry List Traits' or 'The Problem' we learn to live in The Solution, or Flip Side of The Laundry List, one day at a time.

**Sharing Time and Crosstalk Guidelines:** We encourage you to share your experience, strength and hope concerning Reparenting or any other topic that is important to you relating to ACA. We all want to feel safe as well as heard during the meetings. If you feel you need to share very difficult details that could also trigger others in the meeting, please share how you feel, but be gentle with others and take the details of the story to an appropriate person such as a professional or someone who can help you.

We do not cross talk during the sharing time. Cross talk means interrupting, referring to, or commenting on what another person has said during the meeting. 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. For our own clarity we keep the focus fully on ourselves, our own experiences and feelings, and speak from the "I" position. We work toward taking more responsibility in our lives rather than giving advice to others. Please refrain from thanking people for their share. The chairperson will acknowledge the speaker on behalf of the group. If these guidelines are unintentionally crossed, the chairperson might kindly remind you.

Any group member who believes they have been cross-talked can ask the chairperson to restate the boundary. If cross-talk occurs, the chairperson can repeat the boundary during the meeting or speak with the cross-talking person afterwards. The chat feature will be restricted during the sharing time.

Any predatory behaviour, or the use of discriminatory or derogatory language, goes against our unity and common welfare per Tradition 1, so we gently invite participants to keep that in mind. In addition, please be mindful that excessive or repeated swearing can be triggering for others. If you have a concern relating to behaviour or language, kindly speak up by sending a direct message to the host or co-hosts, or send an email to the group secretary at [earlyriserstogether@gmail.com](mailto:earlyriserstogether@gmail.com)

Should the meeting be disrupted there will be a pause while the service team take appropriate action. We have additional security measures in place to keep this a safe space for all. Please report any security concerns to the host or co-hosts.

**Sharing time:** To allow everyone a chance to share, we ask each person to limit their sharing to 3 minutes. This is a raised voice meeting so you don't need to raise your hand. We share starting now until the top of the hour. Please keep your device on mute unless you are sharing. Participants who unmute when not sharing might be placed in the waiting room as a precaution against 'zoom bombing'.

Who would like to be the spiritual timekeeper? (*pause for volunteer*) Thank you (*name*)

Please call "30 seconds" at 2 minutes and 30 seconds, and "time" at 3 minutes.

Would you like to share first?

The meeting is now open for sharing.

**Conclusion: [Top of the Hour]** That's all the time we have. What you hear at this meeting should remain at the meeting. We do not talk about another person's story or experiences to other people. Please respect the anonymity of those who shared with us today.

**7th Tradition:** Our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition states, "Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." Please send donations via PAYPAL directly to Fellow World Travelers Intergroup at the following email address: [acafwt.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:acafwt.treasurer@gmail.com)

The PAYPAL email will now be posted into the chat. Thank you.

## Closing Readings

Would someone like to read the **Tradition of the month, and the Twelfth Tradition?**

### **ACA Traditions:**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on ACA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership in ACA is a desire to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family.
4. Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other Twelve-Step programs.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.
6. An ACA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the ACA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Adult Children of Alcoholics should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.
9. ACA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, films, and other public media.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Would someone like to read **The Flip Side of The Laundry List** (All or perhaps just a few items each)

1. We move out of isolation and are not unrealistically afraid of other people, even authority figures.
2. We do not depend on others to tell us who we are.
3. We are not automatically frightened by angry people and no longer regard personal criticism as a threat.
4. We do not have a compulsive need to recreate abandonment.
5. We stop living life from the standpoint of victims and are not attracted by this trait in our important relationships.
6. We do not use enabling as a way to avoid looking at our own shortcomings.
7. We do not feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves.
8. We avoid emotional intoxication and choose workable relationships instead of constant upset.
9. We are able to distinguish love from pity, and do not think "rescuing" people we "pity" is an act of love.
10. We come out of denial about our traumatic childhoods and regain the ability to feel and express our emotions.
11. We stop judging and condemning ourselves and discover a sense of self-worth.
12. We grow in independence and are no longer terrified of abandonment. We have interdependent relationships with healthy people, not dependent relationships with people who are emotionally unavailable.
13. The characteristics of alcoholism and para-alcoholism we have internalized are identified, acknowledged, and removed.
14. We are actors, not reactors.



Would someone like to read **The Flip Side of The Other Laundry List** (All or perhaps just a few items each)

1. We face and resolve our fear of people and our dread of isolation and stop intimidating others with our power and position.
2. We realize the sanctuary we have built to protect the frightened and injured child within has become a prison and we become willing to risk moving out of isolation.
3. With our renewed sense of self-worth and self-esteem we realize it is no longer necessary to protect ourselves by intimidating others with contempt, ridicule and anger.
4. We accept and comfort the isolated and hurt inner child we have abandoned and disavowed and thereby end the need to act out our fears of enmeshment and abandonment with other people.
5. Because we are whole and complete, we no longer try to control others through manipulation and force and bind them to us with fear in order to avoid feeling isolated and alone.
6. Through our in-depth inventory we discover our true identity as capable, worthwhile people. By asking to have our shortcomings removed we are freed from the burden of inferiority and grandiosity.
7. We support and encourage others in their efforts to be assertive.
8. We uncover, acknowledge and express our childhood fears and withdraw from emotional intoxication.
9. We have compassion for anyone who is trapped in the “drama triangle” and is desperately searching for a way out of insanity.
10. We accept we were traumatized in childhood and lost the ability to feel. Using the 12 Steps as a program of recovery we regain the ability to feel and remember and become whole human beings who are happy, joyous and free.
11. In accepting we were powerless as children to “save” our family we are able to release our self-hate and to stop punishing ourselves and others for not being enough.
12. By accepting and reuniting with the inner child we are no longer threatened by intimacy, by the fear of being engulfed or made invisible.
13. By acknowledging the reality of family dysfunction, we no longer have to act as if nothing were wrong or keep denying that we are still unconsciously reacting to childhood harm and injury.
14. We stop denying and do something about our post-traumatic dependency on substances, people, places and things to distort and avoid reality

**Does anyone have a burning desire to share...?**

That’s all the time we have for sharing. Thank you for being here and please keep coming back. If you need to talk, please speak to someone after the meeting.

It is time to read **The Promises**. Would someone like to read? (All or perhaps just a few items each)

### **The ACA Promises:**

1. We will discover our real identities by loving and accepting ourselves.
2. Our self-esteem will increase as we give ourselves approval on a daily basis.
3. Fear of authority figures and the need to “people-please” will leave us.
4. Our ability to share intimacy will grow inside us.
5. As we face our abandonment issues, we will be attracted by strengths and become more tolerant of weaknesses.
6. We will enjoy feeling stable, peaceful, and financially secure.
7. We will learn how to play and have fun in our lives.
8. We will choose to love people who can love and be responsible for themselves.
9. Healthy boundaries and limits will become easier for us to set.
10. Fears of failure and success will leave us, as we intuitively make healthier choices.
11. With help from our ACA support group, we will slowly release our dysfunctional behaviours.
12. Gradually, with our Higher Power’s help, we will learn to expect the best and get it.

For questions, comments and all other things please email: [earlyriserstogether@gmail.com](mailto:earlyriserstogether@gmail.com)

Please visit our website – [acafellowworldtravelers.com](http://acafellowworldtravelers.com) – for all meeting information.

### **Announcements:** Are there any ACA-related announcements?

If you would like to know more about hosting or co-hosting a meeting, we can explain and support you with the process and the technical side. Please email the ER Secretary at [earlyriserstogether@gmail.com](mailto:earlyriserstogether@gmail.com) for more information.

ER Business Meetings are usually held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Kindly email any issues you would like to be discussed to the same email address.

The chat feature is now open, please use it to share information or contact details if you would like to do so.

Thank you to those who did service today...

## Closing Prayer: (Chair chooses a prayer)

Will those who care to join me to close the meeting with prayer number...

<p><b><u>Number 1: ACA Serenity Prayer (long)</u></b> Loving parent, grant me the serenity, To accept the people I cannot change, Courage to change the one I can And wisdom to know that one is me. Grant me patience for the changes that take time, An appreciation for all that I have, A tolerance for those with different struggles And the strength to get up and try again One day at a time. Thank you.</p>	<p><b><u>Number 2: Serenity Prayer (long)</u></b> Loving parent, grant me the serenity, To accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can And wisdom to know the difference. Grant me patience for the changes that take time, An appreciation for all that I have, A tolerance for those with different struggles And the strength to get up and try again' One day at a time. Thank you.</p>
<p><b><u>Number 3: ACA Serenity prayer</u></b> Loving parent, grant me the serenity, To accept the people I cannot change, Courage to change the one I can And wisdom to know that one is me. Thank you.</p>	<p><b><u>Number 4: Serenity prayer</u></b> Loving parent, grant me the serenity, To accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can And wisdom to know the difference. Thank you.</p>

Thank you, everyone.

## End of Formal Meeting, Beginning of Fellowship

### Fellowship Preamble:

It is now time for our after-meeting fellowship.

The goal of this time is to allow those who did not have a chance to share in the meeting to share now, and for ACA related questions to be raised. Instead of giving advice, we ask that members share their experience, strength and hope.

Please allow those who did not share in the meeting to share first. There is no chair, so every fellow can thank other fellows after their shares. The guidelines regarding no cross-talk and the prompt reporting of predatory behaviour or security concerns still apply.

There will be no timekeeper so we kindly suggest limiting your shares to 4 or 5 minutes and to self-time.

Thank you, everyone, for your participation. Sharing time begins now.

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(Fellowship will end at 8 am CET; Chair/Host will kindly "End the Meeting For All" when exiting Zoom.)

