

2018 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2018 – 1

Submitted on September 8, 2017 by Los Altos Hills, CA (CA988)

Issue: We propose that the ACA fellowship formally adopt the book *The Laundry List: The ACOA Experience* by Tony A and Dan F as official "ACA conference approved literature".

History/Reasoning: At the 2017 ABC, several proposals were offered to incorporate Tony A's steps into the fellowship, into the BRB. It is clear the fellowship desires our founder's words to be more visible and accessible.

Argument in Favor: Tony A is the co-founder of our fellowship. His 1991 recorded talk, his writings and especially his 12 steps are important recovery material for many....and, as folks become more aware, the numbers will only continue to grow. His call to unconditional self-love is an unambiguous message of healing. Even groups are actively using his steps and book in meetings. Adopting his book, which includes his 12 steps, is 'just the right thing to do'. Approving this proposal gives Tony, his recovery, and his book/steps the legitimate, rightful place in our fellowship that they so well deserve.

WSO Analysis: It is against ACA Traditions to endorse an outside enterprise. While Tony A. is recognized as our primary founder, this book has been privately copyrighted and is the property of his and Dan F.'s estates. It is, therefore, an outside enterprise. It is important to note that ACA has an open literature policy, which means that groups may choose on their own to use this book by group conscience, without opposition or censure from WSO. Further details of ACA's literature policy are available in the BRB.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

Proposal 2018 – 2

Submitted on September 14, 2017 by Fitchburg, WI (WI127)

Issue: We propose that we declare November 4th International born whole day.

History/Reasoning: To memorialize, dignity and honor Tony A's birthday.

Argument in Favor: To Let the world know what the focus of ACA is and who Tony A. Was.

WSO Analysis: On page 583 of our Fellowship Text (the BRB) in the section on "Avoiding the Pedestal (Always)" there is reference to an interview with Tony A. from 1992 that describes how he stepped away from ACA for a while because he felt he was being put on a pedestal. While individual groups are free to do as they wish, the WSO Board feels that celebrating Tony A.'s birthday would not be in keeping with his wishes. Instead, groups are encouraged to celebrate the "birthday" of the Laundry List on the last weekend of January each year.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

2018 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2018 – 3

Submitted on September 19, 2017 by Arroyo Grande, CA (CA915)

Issue: We propose that - Include the following statement on all ACA literature: “ACA is a bottom-up, member- driven, 12-Step program. Members create and participate in the service boards which exist solely for, are funded by donations from those members, and derive their mandate directly from that membership. Members supply the manpower, creativity, leadership, resources, and funding for their service boards. Meeting members guide the work of the Intergroups, Intergroup representatives to Regions guide the work of Regions that serve them, and Region Representatives on the WSO Board direct the work of the World Service Board to meet the needs of their participants.”

History/Reasoning: First, ACAs in early recovery often feel inferior to others, downplay their abilities, avoid confrontation, and acquiesce to “superior” people rather than taking on the responsibilities of leadership themselves. In that frame of mind, they “look up to” the people who serve on the services boards and seek direction from the service boards to solve the concerns of their meetings. Second, those who live and work in organizations and companies have learned how top-down hierarchies operate efficiently and often attempt to replicate that operational structure into their ACA service. People on the service boards sometimes mistake leadership for governance, too. Further, throughout our program, we have a serious disconnection about supporting the service Boards financially through 7th Tradition contributions and participation. Meeting donations are not being transferred to the service boards to finance the work of the service boards. We also have the problem of not electing group representatives to the service boards.

Argument in Favor: A statement defining the bottom-up nature of ACA will remind us that we all have the responsibility to step up and maintain the integrity of our program. Tradition 2 reminds us that God speaks to us through our group conscience, and that our leaders are trusted by our groups to serve them, not be governed by them. The important message in Tradition 3 is that groups are autonomous unless the group decisions affect ACA as a whole by failing to elect a group representative to the service board. Our 7th Tradition reminds us that it is up to us to fund the activities of our program. Our 9th Tradition reminds us that the service boards and committees we create are directly responsible to those they serve.

WSO Analysis: The WSO agrees with the core sentiment of this motion, that ACA is a bottom-up organization. To that point, ACA groups have more direct access to our WSO than exists in most other fellowships, starting with the Board's monthly telephone conference, which is open to all ACA members. We also have an Annual Business Conference that can be attended by anyone in the fellowship and to which all groups may send delegates. This is where the WSO Board is ratified and granted its authority by voting delegates. Further, a Service Structure Committee, formed in 2016, is working actively to increase the fellowship's role in ACA service and policy, and all ACA members are invited to participate in that long-range strategic effort.

WSO is, however, unable to support the stated proposal because we feel it poses significant downsides, and could inadvertently cripple WSO's ability to serve the Fellowship.

Examples: 1) The directive that WSO is "funded by donations from (ACA) members" suggests it's improper to use book sales as a source of revenue - a position unique among 12-step fellowships, and one that would radically cut ACA revenue and virtually all aspects of its services overnight. 2) Because the Regional structure is currently being revised, the fellowship is not in a position to have regions direct WSO board policy - it could weaken the existing service apparatus and lead to less effective world and local services for the fellowship, not more.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

2018 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2018 – 4

Submitted on September 27, 2017 by Scarboro, Ontario, Canada (CAN332)

Issue: We propose that web technical support be provided to all ACA meeting and/or groups or a vehicle to connect web expertise with the world wide fellowship. This will assist with future growth. The technical support will include a web template and troubleshooting assistance to support local ACA meetings and events.

History/Reasoning: The reality is that technical support is extremely challenging to obtain. It is a skill level that is not available to the average person or fellowship.

Argument in Favor: We realize this web support can't be all things to all groups. Rather than each group trying to reinvent the wheel of a website every time they begin, they can have a foundation to build from with support. More people are finding ACA through the web. Multiple website increases attraction to the fellowship.

WSO Analysis: WSO does not have the resources, either financial or otherwise, to be able to provide direct technical assistance to ACA groups. Please note that with volunteer help the WSO is actively developing an enhanced web presence, which will keep us quite busy for a while. We will be happy to share lessons learned and other web related material as we make progress ourselves. Meanwhile many Intergroups around the world have developed local websites. They may continue to share their Experience, Strength and Hope in web-related endeavors.

We will also continue to do our best to provide resources on the website that help groups carry the message to their local members. This will include posting guidelines, following the traditions, etc.

Note: Individuals with technology experience are encouraged to volunteer with the Website and Database Committee by contacting webservant@adultchildren.org.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

Proposal 2018 – 5

Submitted on September 27, 2017 by Greater Toronto Area, CN (IG558)

Issue: We propose that WSO look into adding intergroup and meeting group web links into the WSO website directory listings on www.adultchildren.org.

History/Reasoning: We would like to easily access other fellowships web links for additional information and resources. The current directory on www.adultchildren.org does not contain web links.

Argument in Favor: This increases our ability to collaborate and share resources and new ideas as a fellowship. This will increase our healing opportunities with efficiency worldwide. Its grass roots sharing. Web links will afford the different fellowship groups and abundance of opportunities.

WSO Analysis: WSO agrees it is a good idea to provide web links on the WSO website for intergroups and meetings to our members to help us find each other better on the web. We think this can be achieved while still following the ACA Traditions. We expect this to be part of a newly designed website and meeting list that our Website and Database Committee hopes to unveil during the first quarter of 2018.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

2018 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2018 – 6

Submitted on September 28, 2017 by Fishkill, NY (NY099)

Issue: We propose that wherever the phrase "false-self" appears in the A.C.A. literature that it be replaced with the phrase "adapted-self".

History/Reasoning: We have found that a great number of adult children find the phrase "false-self" to be judgmental, inaccurate, shaming and counterproductive.

Argument in Favor: The term "adapted-self" is non-judgmental, accurately describes what adult children did in order to survive the trauma of a dysfunctional home, is much more amenable to ownership and integration in the recovery process. "Adapted-self" is a much more compassionate term.

WSO Analysis: There are inherent challenges in trying to line-edit/wordsmith ACA literature in a large forum of ABC delegates. For this reason, individuals and groups that have ideas for changes to existing literature and submission of new literature are encouraged to contact the WSO Literature Committee through the Contact page on the WSO website.

The Literature Committee has a year-round process for evaluating fellowship suggestions for creating or amending literature. Such suggestions may be sent at any time to litstaff@adultchildren.org, and they will be reviewed by the evaluation subcommittee--a process that often involves detailed editing discussions with the suggestions' authors. Suggestions that gather support are forwarded to the full Literature Committee, and in turn to the WSO board and ABC for final approval as conference-approved ACA WSO literature.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

2018 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2018 – 7

Submitted on September 30, 2017 by New York, NY (NY131)

Issue: We propose that the WSO utilize online conferencing and voting technologies to provide remote access to the Annual Business Conference, for those not chairing in the WSO. This is so that phone and cyber meeting groups, geographically distant members, those with limited time availability or childcare obligations, or other restrictions, may attend as delegates or otherwise vote on matters of concern to ACA as a whole.

History/Reasoning: The ABC is broadcast via audio streaming, however this does not provide interactive remote participation at the conference. The WSO already uses teleconferencing for committee meetings. Currently thousands of US dollars and at least 3 weekdays are required to attend and vote at the ABC. Although the ABC invites individual ACA members and groups, those willing to have a voice at the ABC must have the time, and the financial and physical ability to attend, or they must engage in significant WSO level service in order to obtain financial support to attend the conference. Not all groups or intergroups have sufficient funds to send a delegate to the ABC. This implies that a significant number of adult children and ACA groups around the world, are left out of the ABC. Corporations widely use interactive video and telephone teleconferencing. Both in-person and remote video attendees are able to deliberate face-to-face in an orderly fashion through a moderator, typically with the active speaker's image displayed on participants' monitors. Similarly, remote ABC delegates could video conference and interact with in-person delegates as well. A listen-only connection, such as one that accepts button presses as voting choices, is an example of how voting could be easily extended to recognize registered, non-delegate voters.

Argument in Favor: There are inexpensive means available today to allow adult children to be heard. ACA members are willing, but not able, to participate in the bottom-up structure of the ABC. It is the hope and right of all adult children to be counted and heard.

WSO Analysis: The Website and Database Committee is currently reviewing technical options that would allow groups to remotely participate in the ABC. This is a major effort and requires coordination with a number of WSO Committees and over 1,700 ACA group representatives. The Committee's concern is that trying to deliver something to such a large number of groups too quickly could hurt the integrity of the ABC voting process. The Committee hopes to begin piloting some version of remote participation for the Board's monthly teleconferences after the first of the year that may then be piloted at the Toronto ABC.

Note: The authors of this motion, and others with technology expertise, are invited to join the Website and Database Committee to help with this work. Please contact webservant@adultchildren.org.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

2018 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2018 – 8

Submitted on September 30, 2017 by Blooming Grove, NY (NY080)

Issue: We propose a set of 12 steps that more accurately reflect The Problem and Solution of ACA Recovery. The proposed steps serve that purpose: The 12 Steps to Emotional Sobriety for Adult Children: 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 our true selves. 3) Made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the loving guidance of God, as we came to understand God, learning to love ourselves with compassion. 4) Made a thorough inventory of lifelong defenses and survival traits employed by our parents and ourselves to better understand the multigenerational nature of our post trauma condition. 5) Admitted to God, to ourselves, to an informed other the exact nature of our childhood abuse and neglect, including related PTSD and unresolved grief. 6) Allowed ourselves to be vulnerable under safe conditions so that our Higher Power could heal the broken heart of our inner child. 7) Humbly asked our Higher Power to assist us with our healing process as we learn to talk, trust, and feel all of our feelings. 8) Made lists of those we harmed and those who harmed us, and became willing to forgive ourselves while praying for others. 9) Worked to repair the damage in our relationships except when to do so would expose us to unsafe people and situations, or cause harm to others. 10) Continued to take personal inventory and to re-parent ourselves with unconditional love. 11) Sought through prayer and meditation to develop our conscious contact with our Higher Power, praying for clarity, inner peace and emotional sobriety. 12) Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried with humility to carry this healing message to the still suffering adult child, and practices these principles in all our relationships. Michael S. Copyright 9/28/2017

History/Reasoning: In 1984 ACA became an autonomous program adapting AA's 12 Steps written for external addictions. These steps do not accurately reflect trauma recovery and emotional sobriety at the core of ACA recovery as discussed in our literature. Our founder, Tony A., attempted to draft steps that reflected ACA recovery. His steps are copyrighted in a book and unavailable. Many fellow travelers believe they are incomplete for trauma recovery similar to AA's steps. They do not address the complete picture of trauma recovery and emotional sobriety described in our ACA literature.

Argument in Favor: If studied in depth one will find that these proposed 12 steps accurately convey the pathway to trauma recovery, emotional sobriety, and relationship repair work for adult children. We believe that these steps match more accurately the content of Chapter 7 of the BRB "The 12 Steps of ACA". The same can be said of the Yellow Workbook. They are written in the language of the BRB as it relates to The Problem, Solution and the Promises of ACA.

WSO Analysis: ACA's core writings (the Laundry List, the Problem, Solution, and the ACA Steps and Traditions) play a unique role in shaping our program's identity. Therefore, any changes to these writings should be thoroughly vetted and considered by the Literature Committee, WSO Board, and the broad fellowship over an extended period of time before they are finally presented to the ABC for a vote. This procedure ensures that our core readings cannot be easily changed by any one body, service structure or group, or "in the heat of the moment."

The Literature Committee and the WSO Board have identified many risks associated with this specific proposal of an alternate set of 12 Steps, and therefore cannot support its adoption. Such sweeping changes to the steps would raise identity questions among potential newcomers from other recovery fellowships as to whether "ACA is really a 12-Step program." Recovery clubs that only serve 12-Step programs might question whether ACA meetings qualify for space.

2018 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Additionally, the process of making wholesale changes to the Steps could send ACA down a road of repeated tinkering with the Steps and other core writings at future ABC meetings that would quickly destabilize ACA's identity and unity of purpose.

At the same time, the Literature Committees recognizes that there is substantial interest in helping members apply the 12 Steps in a gentler manner suited to the needs of adult children--with a greater emphasis on self-love and non-shaming. Much as the BRB already does with the Fourth Step, new explanatory language on the Steps could help ACA members practice them in a more self-loving manner. The authors of this motion are invited to join the Literature Committee to help integrate such gentler language throughout our literature.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

Proposal 2018 – 9

Submitted on September 30, 2017 by Blooming Grove, NY (NY080)

Issue: We propose that in the event any new information or material is made available before or during the proposal voting process at the Annual Business Conference, this material must be shared with all delegates at the same time with an opportunity for further discussion before any final voting takes place.

History/Reasoning: During the 2017 ABC, an unfortunate incident occurred whereby material was introduced into the delegate conference room and circulated to a few but not all delegates. This information was relevant to the proposal but not everyone was aware of it. A discussion should have ensued as to why the material was introduced and how it might affect the vote.

Argument in Favor: In order to avoid such mishaps in the future, this proposal attempts to standardize procedures to share all new information with all delegates at the same time so that reasonable discussion can take place and a suitable amount of time can be given to digest the new material.

WSO Analysis: This proposal is already being addressed. The 2018 ABC Committee, the Toronto Host Committee and the Delegate Training Subcommittee are taking whatever steps that are within their power to ensure that if someone has pertinent information that would influence the ABC Delegates about a proposal, that they bring it forward immediately to one of these committees or to the Conference Chairperson. Please note, that neither the Conference Chair nor the body can force disclosure of information; it is up to the individual delegates to divulge or disclose relevant information. If someone chooses to hold back and/or share with only a select few people, who in turn decide not to share that information, we are powerless over these choices.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

2018 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2018 – 10

Submitted on September 30, 2017 by Blooming Grove, NY (NY080)

Issue: We propose that rules for presentation of proposals at the Annual Business Conference be established in advance so that presenters know how much time they have to present and defend their proposals, and that these rules NOT be changed at whim during the ABC.

History/Reasoning: Prior to the 2017 ABC, some guidelines were discussed with Board members and during the delegate training sessions regarding length of time for presenters to make their proposals. Then, at the ABC the rules were changed 3 times within 24 hours causing much confusion and needless frustration.

Argument in Favor: This proposal is an attempt to standardize guidelines for presenting proposals giving presenters adequate time to prepare appropriately.

WSO Analysis: This proposal is already being addressed by the ABC Committee so that a uniform, published process will be in place before the ABC. As a point of order, however, when a proposal is received by the Ballot Prep Committee, the WSO considers the efforts of the submitting group to be complete. While Robert's Rules suggests that authors of a proposal might have time to present their argument at the start of the discussion, the 'Argument in Favor' that the group wrote was their opportunity to present their case. This has been the case because very few proposing groups have been able to afford to send a delegate to the ABC. To do otherwise would seem to give some proposals more weight/importance than others. At the ABC, if a proposing group has a delegate present, they are seated on a level stage with all other delegates, with the same opportunity to give input during the discussion time. They may use their time to defend their proposal if they choose to do so.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

Proposal 2018 – 11

Submitted on September 30, 2017 by Blooming Grove, NY (NY080)

Issue: We propose that presenters of proposals at the Annual Business Conference be given an opportunity to speak first for 5-10 minutes before general discussion begins and be given a chance to make a 3 minute rebuttal before a vote is taken.

History/Reasoning: During the 2017 ABC, in the absence of any set guidelines, some delegates who came to the ABC to present their proposals did even have a chance to speak.

Argument in Favor: This proposal is an attempt to standardize guidelines for presenting proposals and allowing the speaker adequate time to explain the reasoning behind the proposal and to make counter arguments as needed. It would benefit all delegates to gain a fuller understanding of the significance of the proposal if the presenter has enough time to do justice to his/her proposal.

WSO Analysis: See the WSO Analysis for Proposal 10

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.

2018 ABC Ballot for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposal 2018 – 12

Submitted on September 30, 2017 by Blooming Grove, NY (NY080)

Issue: We propose that Robert's Rules be followed consistently and be enforced throughout the Annual Business Conference proceedings, especially during the proposal voting process. Specifically, if there is a call for a vote at ANY time, there must be a majority vote to end discussion before a vote is taken.

History/Reasoning: During the 2017 Annual Business Conference the vote to end discussion and proceed to a vote was not enforced uniformly with all proposals. This led to shutting down the discussion prematurely for some proposals when delegates still felt they had something important to share.

Argument in Favor: This proposal is an attempt to ensure that Robert's Rules are followed consistently. The leader of the ABC proceedings should be well informed and equipped to enforce these rules whether or not the WSO employs a parliamentarian.

WSO Analysis: The job of chairing the ABC is not easy one. The Conference Chair is chosen by the delegates the day of the conference and that person does the best they can. A clear understanding of "point of order" to correct a mistake in procedure and emphasis on "point of information" to add any additional information to the discussion will add clarity to the process. Added emphasis on these two clear points of Robert's Rules will be included in the procedures for the ABC and the delegate training. Keep in mind that we operate ultimately by group conscience with Robert's Rules used to resolve conflict, per the ACA WSO ByLaws.

2017 was the first year that a professional parliamentarian was hired for the ABC and we will continue to do so to help with continuity and to help the elected Conference Chair conduct the meeting. Everything that happens at an ABC is also a factor of time because all business must be conducted within the schedule. Therefore, if a vote is called, the Chair will do their best to ensure that all variables are taken into account before allowing that to move forward.

If this proposal receives a two-thirds positive vote from the fellowship, it will be included as part of the ABC agenda, with the result of that discussion provided as part of the ABC minutes.