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The growing up of the Inner Child

In every human being lives an Inner Child. This is the part in all people that is creative, intuitive, playful and emotional.

This Inner Child is the personal key holder in all people for recovery from addictions, pain from the past, the emotional and physical well-being, intimacy in relationships and the creativity and wisdom of our inner self.

For ACAs, this Inner Child is usually buried under post-traumatic stress disorders and traumas that are unconsciously caused by the caregivers or parents during their upbringing, often hidden or buried among adult characters.

ACA is a rescue program for an Inner Child, by going through the ACA Steps in the order of ACA Step One to ACA Step Twelve.

After the ACA Twelve Steps, we can continue working on the integration of both the Laundry List and the Other Laundry List, the removal of the character defects and keep reparenting our self.

Only then does the real Inner Child journey begin: the journey to be and stay happy, joyous and free.

To finally become the one who wants to play, have fun, be creative and feel all the warm emotions – the growing up of the Inner Child.

We learn intuitively to know what we need and what we can live without.

We are no longer reacting to people, places, and things.

We live and let live.
*ACA Amsterdam –
the Netherlands 2019*

About the ACA ComLINE

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

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“... feel all the warm emotions – the growing up of the Inner Child.”

The Gift of Reparenting Myself

by Diana R.

Healing my past has been such a process and a life-long journey. During a special time in recovery, I spent a lot of time sitting: reading, writing and getting to know the wounded part inside me.

I learned to become my own loving parent, by lessening the urgency of my feelings of abandonment – my deepest childhood wound.

The ACA Yellow Workbook was a great way for me to revisit my family of origin traumas and find deeper healing by writing and sharing with others.

Finding deeper meaning

I practiced saying “yes” to many of the positive desires and interests of the kids inside, but also to my grownup self. I learned to create a safe nurturing home for myself, and how to give reassurance and comfort to my scared inner children.

I learned to be my own provider. I started collections and making artistic things with my hands.

I listened to music, read books, and practiced journaling as a means of inner communication. I developed a stronger loving-parent self

who accepted and grew to love all my inner children.

Through therapy, I learned to imagine a better life for us all. Then, I made it happen.

Making a better life

I moved to Florida, where it was summer all year round, where there were beaches and other amazing natural environments for me (us) to explore, and where I could afford to live and start my own business. I got tickets to the orchestra and plays. I bought a house.

For the next 25 years, I focused on my work with others and taking care of me. I connected deeply with my youngest daughter and her family who lived nearby.

Practicing self-care

Today, self-care looks more like calming my breath and heart rate through bio-feedback, regular acupuncture, relaxation techniques, walking in nature, making tea or soup, long warm showers, treasure hunts in thrift stores, reading novels, listening to music and singing, writing in my writers group, talking to a friend, creating something with my hands, working in my permaculture garden, tending my pets, and more; you know, more being in the *now*.

I always enjoy sharing these small successes with Fellow Travelers who “get it.”



I am not alone

Turning 80 has also allowed me the opportunity to talk about and work towards the acceptance of the inevitability of death. The more I trust “us” to be together in death, the more I feel I am not alone.

These days, now when I feel “triggered,” there’s almost an immediate sense of surrender and calmness.

I feel “we’re all together right here,” and there is a sense of acceptance, almost feeling a sense of excitement for this next part of our journey.

Grateful for this spiritual journey

In the meantime, I will continue to be grateful for this spiritual journey, as I live out the rest of my days in a small suite at the back of my daughter’s house.

Because of my willingness to accept the challenges of ACA, and through the incredible gift of Grace, I’ve learned to forgive. I’ve discovered my inner loving parent

and all my wonderful inner children.

I’ve thanked my beautiful daughter for the incredible gift she has been, but mostly, I’m grateful for my higher power for the patience it took to help me open my eyes and love this life.

I had a lot of medical trauma as a child, and I know I will be triggered again when death visits me. Dealing with those feelings will require frequent attuning inside and asking others for help/care.

The healing process continues

I am practicing these skills with Fellow Travelers, my doctors and my daughter. It’s always been difficult to ask for help, but I’ve gotten so much better! As the healing process continues, I know it will offer new challenges and opportunities right to the end.

But there is comfort as I feel so much gratitude for my therapist during my couch period, for my people in ACA, and for the many friends,

family members, and writers who have helped me along the way.

I struggled with the long-distance relationships with my other two kids and their families. I found more satisfying ways to connect long distance with my sisters.

Focusing and preparing

At 78, I retired to focus on myself again and to prepare myself for the experience of death. I looked for small, ACA-step groups and Fellow Travelers with whom to share stories.

Facing the fear of dying

Turning 80 certainly triggered some of my abandonment fears around the fear of dying. Then I discovered visionary philosophers whose ideas helped me to feel hopeful about the future of life on this earth, and that my life really has had purpose and meaning. I have received many gifts from the people I’ve met along the way, and I’ve given many gifts, too; this truly has been my spiritual path. ✨

Step Ten

“Continued to take personal inventory, and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.”

Step Eleven

“Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand God, praying only for knowledge of God’s will for us and the power to carry that out.”

Step Twelve

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

“Seed of Fear”

by Abby F.

Seed of fear, sown too young
Ripples queerly

It sinks, it sprouts, it spreads

Seed of fear, sown too young
Sprouts anger and resentment

Seed of fear, sown too young
Sprouts isolation and procrastination

Seed of fear, sown too young
Sprouts indignation and pridefulness

Seed of fear, sown too young
Sprouts dependence and disease

Seed of fear, sown too young
Ripples queerly through the soul

Grows rapidly in the mind
But when God is my gardener

Fear is pulled, roots and all 🌿



Fly Up High, Fall Down Low: Anything But the “Static Quo”

by Mark G.

A wo/man of heart, of emotional muscle|–
Meets face-to-face
With those past voices
Does not let them become “static quo”
Just scratching the surface of soulful time
and sacred space.

Safely typing text of “concern” is but one
of the choices.
Is it someone’s default?
A shifty agile or, perhaps, faux-fragile
Conflict neutral state of grace.

No matter how fast you run
Or fly so high on another’s ride
As that cool smoke and mirrors breeze
Turns to hot and heavy air
Til lightening splits the pre(sent) tense...

Finally, hope... that you’ve hit bottom
The survival seat of one’s sixth sense!
No more need to save face
As a too proud mask begins to crack
And tears stream into death gray ash
The rebirth clay for a future-Phoenix
on the rise...

For what ascends first must crash
To break free of silence-shamed gravity
Or vacant stare loyalty

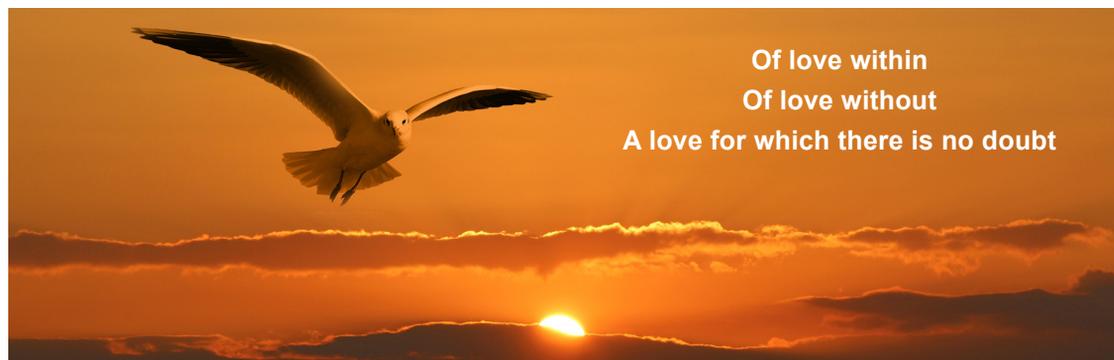
to family portrait sanity.
But then, out from the shadows,
with nowhere to hide
Crawls a secret past-scarred world inside.

Does it seem an absurdity
To get down, to dig down with others –
Humble sisters and brothers
For that deep buried “Pandora’s Password”:
Don’t Talk, Don’t Trust, Don’t Feel?

Asks one sadder and stronger
Who with dirty nails and black earth knees
Has finally learned to rest within his skin.
The reward – a well-worn journey guide:
One must begin to separate
One must be separate to begin
To seek the graceful threefold path:

Of love within
Of love without
A love for which there is no doubt.

From one who knows his place
Who knows his inner spirit cry...
As “*A Wise Man and a Wise Guy!*” 🌿



Of love within
Of love without
A love for which there is no doubt

The “NonDom Book”

by Robin R.

Knowing of my interest in art as a tool for recovery, my counselor gave me a little blank book to encourage me to engage in non-dominant handwriting.

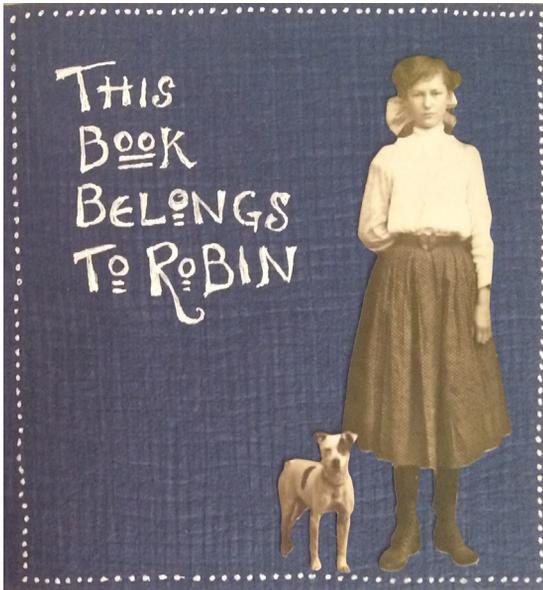
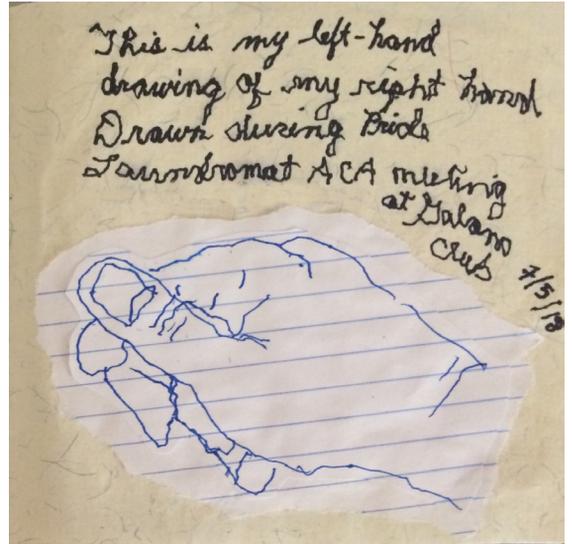
This is a beautiful little book with hand-made paper containing bits of plants and seeds. I was so afraid to even touch it. But, in the continual process of being my own loving parent, I gave the book to Vanilla Bean, my

8-year-old inner child. We gave ourselves full permission to do anything we wanted in our special book.

We worked on this together. She picked out all the art, and we designed it together. We take turns drawing and writing in it.

Some of what we did together is shown below.

What she has done by herself is a *secret!* 🌸



Untitled

by Kimberly B.

When we admit we finally let in
that which we're afraid to face,
the very truth that we fear
yet paradoxically hold dear,
a dilemma for the whole human race.

An age-old problem for all
as we have forever feared "the fall"
but especially in this time, in this space,
shown through our words and our deeds,
we are communally in dire need
of our loving, higher power's grace.

Stop to listen and you may be guided
through your heart, and just as I did,
grab the hand of your fellow human
and dare to ask,

*How have my words or deeds hurt you?
How have yours hurt me?
What can we do together
to better serve our family tree?*

This simple act will build bridges
rather than severing ties,
transparency in our communication,
letting go of any lies.

The moment we do this the burden is lifted,
we are back to feeling free,
which is the way we felt before coming here,
the goal of collective humanity.



Long story short:

Admitting need not feel so heavy,
but rather like holding an E-ticket for a ride,
at our favorite childhood amusement park,
sitting with our best friend at our side. 🦋

Promise Ten

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

Promise Eleven

*"With help from our
ACA support group,
we will slowly release
our dysfunctional
behaviors."*

Promise Twelve

*"Gradually, with
our Higher Power's
help, we will learn to
expect the best
and get it."*

Discovering My Loving Parent and My Inner Child(ren)

by *Vonnie G., Kansas*

While I was working Steps 2 and 3 in the ACA Yellow Workbook, I learned my Higher Power has always been a kind and loving parent to me; such a powerful discovery! There was never any kindness or love shown to me by my parents, only trauma and more drama.

Through the Big Red Book (BRB) and my Yellow Workbook, I learned how to practice re-parenting myself with kindness and love.

An endless list of negative self-talk

I had to learn how to change my negative self-talk because I had learned to believe all the things my parents said to me: “You’re worthless!”, “Who do you think you are!”, “You’re never gonna amount to anything!”, “You’re stupid!”, and the list goes on and on.

My Higher Power’s Words

But then I started to repeat my Higher Power’s loving words to myself: “You are so special,” “I love who you are,” “you can do this,” “I believe in you,” “you are such a wonderful child,” and “I’m always here for you.” I worked really hard to change that negative self talk, and then one day, I started to finally believe those words. I am so glad I didn’t give up.

Discovering Inner Children

Then in Step 4, I discovered all of my inner children. As I asked myself the questions in the Yellow Workbook, I saw myself sitting in a chair, in front of a whole line of children as they patiently waited to meet me.

I heard them whispering, “Hey, this lady really wants to meet each of us, and she

wants to hear all our stories! Nobody’s ever wanted to meet us, so let’s wait our turn! She’s writing our stories down!” They were all clamoring for attention, but so unsure of themselves.

Loving Parent as a beautiful bond

My Loving Parent enjoyed becoming the loving “interviewer.” She was kind and loving and a beautiful bond was formed with the children. They saw her as someone who cared, and she saw them as the wounded and broken children who’d survived the “death camps” of my childhood. She respectfully listened and heard every word; she did her best to record their experiences, but most importantly, she heard how all of this deeply affected their hearts and spirits.

Our spiritual connection

At some point, my Loving Parent then gathered all of us together for our first reading. My Higher Power, my loving parent, my inner child(ren), my own adult self (the adult child in recovery) – now all connected to our Higher Power – we started reading all of those sheets out loud together.

Finding honor

It felt as if those children were listening to a radio show that made them famous! I heard myself reading out loud all I’d gone through, and I felt such honor for myself for making it through



all of this, safely to the “other” side. I then read the 12 worksheets a second time to my Higher Power. Believe it or not, it was a very different feeling reading it out loud to my Higher Power.

I was emotionally so “full” the entire time as I did this reading. It created a wonderful, strong bond with my Higher Power as a loving

witness and accepting parent who had always been there.

The greatest gift

The greatest gift I received from working The Steps was meeting that long line of little Vonnies. We created a bond of respect, a love and interest that has since never been broken.

They know now I am interested in them and understand that I want to hear what they

think and how they feel. They waited all these years for me to find them, and I will be forever grateful for their discovery.

A wonderful reality

I now have a wonderful daily connection with my hurting, confused little ones inside. They know they can always come to me, and I will hear and listen. It makes integration of the divided self a wonderful reality. 🌸



CALL FOR SHARES: LOVING PARENT GUIDEBOOK

The Loving Parent Guidebook (LPG) Committee **needs your help** to make the forthcoming LPG more personal and accessible! We believe this guidebook, which is chock full of exercises and tools, will be an important new reparenting resource for newcomers and seasoned members alike.

To reflect the rich range of reparenting styles and personal experiences, **we need fellowship voices**. Whether you're new to reparenting or have been practicing for years, your share can make a major impact on adult children learning to reparent themselves.

For more info and to submit an anonymous share, visit
<https://acawso.org/category/loving-parent-guidebook/>



Adult Children of Alcoholics®/Dysfunctional Families
World Service Organization

Call for Shares: Loving Parent Guidebook

The proposal to create a Loving Parent Guidebook (LPG) passed the 2017 ABC unanimously. It was envisioned as an expanded, experiential guide to support Chapter 8 in the Big Red Book.

The Loving Parent Guidebook team has been hard at work since January 2018 and is now in the writing stage. We believe this guidebook will be an important new re-parenting resource for newcomers and seasoned members alike.

But we need your help. To make the Guidebook complete, we need fellowship voices on personal re-parenting experiences. This can include how you made contact with your Inner Child, how you interact on a daily basis, or any other experience that has been meaningful to you.

Your voices will help reflect the rich range of re-parenting styles and experiences

and make the guidebook more personal and accessible.

You can make a major impact on adult children learning to re-parent themselves and practice self-love, all without participating in a conference call or leaving the comfort of your own home.

If you are interested in sharing on any of the topics below or anything else about re-parenting that's meaningful to you, please visit https://forms.zohopublic.com/admin1564/form/Loving-ParentGuidebookShareSubmissions/formperma/btmx57Hv99aU3P2h0W4c9uBu3iLXpprIaNmddqy_io

for guidelines and to submit your anonymous share. You can submit more than once. Please limit your shares to 350 words.

It helps the committee greatly if you can submit separate shares for separate topics. Thank you!

General Reparenting

- How has re-parenting changed your life?
- What have been the fruits of re-parenting?
- What does it mean to re-parent?
- What do you wish you'd known at the beginning of your re-parenting journey?
- What advice would you give newcomers about re-parenting?
- What have you learned about re-parenting?
- In what ways do you re-parent?
- What regular re-parenting practices do you do?
- Mirror Work
- Non-dominant Handwriting
- Journaling
- Letters
- Affirmations
- Reparenting & Gentleness, Humor, Love & Respect
- Reparenting with the help of recovery partners, sponsor/fellow traveler, meetings
- Reparenting & Friendships: Healthy play dates (including fellow travelers and with sponsor and as a sponsor).
- Reparenting At Work.
- Reparenting & Dating: Healthy



- Playmates (and dating shares)
- Reparenting & Service
- Reparenting & Family life: detaching with love, etc.
- Reparenting & Boundaries
- Play/fun and reparenting
- How you use reparenting to care for yourself for upcoming family visits, work meetings, difficult conversations, etc.
- How do the steps and reparenting work together for you?
- Therapy and reparenting work (grief work)
- What does living in the solution of “Becoming Your Own Loving Parent” look/feel like for you?
- What's different in your life with reparenting?
- How do you connect Higher Power and reparenting?

Loving Parent

- How did you meet your Loving Parent?
- What have you done to cultivate your Loving Parent?
- How does your Loving Parent help your inner child deal with feelings, needs and thoughts?
- How does your Loving Parent validate, reassure and nurture your inner child?

- How does your Loving Parent celebrate your inner child?
- How have you helped your inner child learn, grow and build self-esteem?

Critical Parent

- Detaching with love from the Critical Parent
- Fruits of detaching with love from Critical Parent
- How you view your Critical Parent
- How your relationship to your Critical Parent has changed over your reparenting journey
- What worked to detach with love from Critical Parent?
- What didn't work to detach with love from Critical Parent?
- How do you relate to the idea of the Critical Parent as an “adaptive parent” as put forth in the BRB?

Inner Child / True Self

- What misconceptions did you have about the inner child and inner child work? How has that changed?
- How did you meet your inner child?
- What has helped your inner child trust your Loving Parent?
- What's your relationship like with your inner child?

- Strategies/tools that help you connect with inner child
- What is an inner child to you?
- Common thoughts, feelings and behaviors when in wounded child

Teenager

- How you met your teenager
- What's your teenager like? How do you work with your teenager?
- Distinguishing teenager from Critical Parent
- Cultivating a relationship with your teenager

Reparenting Challenges

- Resistance to Reparenting – encountering, overcoming
- How have you gotten through hard times with your inner child, teenager, etc.
- What reparenting challenges have you faced? How have you overcome them?
- What gets in the way of regular reparenting?

Self-Care

- How reparenting helped you with self-care
- How reparenting helped you identify and transform patterns of self-neglect rooted in childhood neglect

For more info on ACA WSO website, go to: <https://acawso.org/2019/08/30/loving-parent-guidebook-project-update/> 🌿



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