



## Why We Become Our Own Loving Parents – Chapter 1

**Question: Why do we want to be our own Loving Parents for our Inner Children?**

### **Reading**

#### **To Stop Them from Sabotaging Us**

If we do not recognize our Inner Children, they do what real children do when they are ignored. They retaliate and find ways to sabotage our best efforts. Our Inner Children withdraw when they are afraid, worried, or angry, and we lose energy, time, money, creativity, and spontaneity. We remained stuck at various life stages where we were so emotionally stunted that we stopped growing up. Examples of sabotage include our addictions and compulsions (adrenaline, alcohol, codependence, dangerous or risky behavior, gambling, food, drugs, sex, tobacco, workaholism, hoarding, etc.). Sabotage also includes non-productive or negative behaviors such as

Abuse of self or others	Low self-esteem
Anxiety	Lying
Attitude that the world owes me	Manipulation
Blaming others	Paranoia
Codependence	Passive aggression
Defensiveness	Pretending to work a program
Demand for immediate attention	Sulking
Drama Queen	Procrastination
Embarrassment	Rage
Emotional outbursts	Rescuing and fixing others
Extreme cautiousness	Rescue seeking
Focus on detail, not the big picture	Revenge seeking
Fixation on slights of others	Self-sabotage
Habitual coercion of others	Shame

#### **To End the Internal Conflict**

The fragments of ourselves all have different needs and wants, so we remain in constant internal conflict for as long as the parts of our fractured selves operate in isolation.

#### **To Integrate the Fragmented Parts of Ourselves**

When we help our Inner Children complete the life stages they missed, they begin to integrate their needs and wants with those of our Loving Parents. When they are all integrated with our adult selves, we then have solid, unified personalities. As whole people, we then go on to build happy, healthy, serene lives.

#### **To Become Happy, Joyous, and Free**

When our integrated Inner Children feel safe, loved, and respected by us, they provide us with curiosity, abounding energy, and perfect trust in a Higher Power.

### Exercise - Why We Want to Become Our Own Loving Parents

*Each person in the group may share his/her answers on the following questions (or pass).*

1. How does your Inner Child sabotage you (see the list above)?
2. What are your examples of wanting to do different things at the same time or not knowing what is the right thing to do?
3. Share one need or want of your Inner Child.
4. When you were a little child, share one thing you were intensely curious about, one time you were really excited about something, or one time you had outrageous fun.
5. What do you do today that you are intensely curious about, excited about, or is great fun?

### Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week – Why We Become our Own Loving Parents

*Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information and exercises as well as the activities below with your sponsor, a program friend, and/or participants at a meeting. Ideally, over time, you will work through all the unresolved issues addressed in this chapter.*

1. Write your version of this affirmation on a notecard or poster and read it three times a day for one week:

*I am becoming my own Loving Parent  
to help my Inner Child  
grow up emotionally.*

2. Fill in the blanks next to the outline of your Inner Child below of what your life will be like when you are happy, joyous, and free.

Relationship I will be in

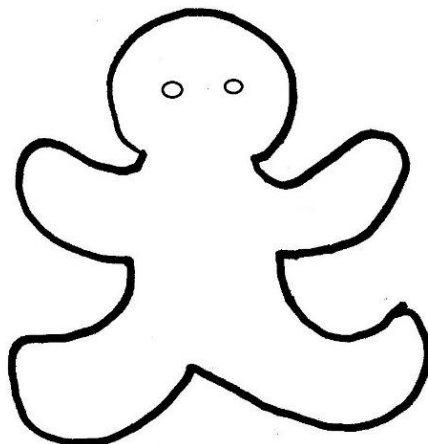
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Job I will be doing

\_\_\_\_\_

Where I will live

\_\_\_\_\_



Things I will do

\_\_\_\_\_

Fun I will have

\_\_\_\_\_

Friends who will support me

\_\_\_\_\_



## What Loving Parents Do; What You Can Do – Chapter 2

**Question: What do actual loving parents do for their children?**

### **Reading**

Loving parents provide their children with solid emotional foundations, and nurture healthy identity development. They love, protect, listen to, appropriately touch, and guide their children gently through the trials and tribulations of growing up. This chapter is an overview of what you can expect in this workbook.

### **A. Loving parents provide their children with strong, solid emotional foundations**

In functional homes, parents automatically provide their children with basic needs of air, food, water, shelter, clothing, and sleep. They provide safety and security. They foster a sense of being loved and belonging in the family, extended family, neighborhood, community, and world. They model how to be trustworthy. They have supportive people around them who give them energy. They bolster their children's self-esteem. They support the children's efforts to explore, learn, grow, and reach the extent of their abilities.

### **Exercise**

*Circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Provide basic needs: air, food, water, shelter, clothing, and sleep.
2. Ensure safety and security.
3. Foster a sense of being loved and belonging in the family, extended family, neighborhood, community, and world.
4. Learn to recognize trustworthiness and be trustworthy.
5. Gather supportive people around you who give you energy.
6. Bolster your Inner Child's high sense of self-esteem.
7. Support your Inner Child's efforts to explore, learn, grow, and reach the extent of their abilities.

## **B. Loving parents encourage healthy identity development**

Good parents model to their children how to present themselves in the world for success. They model and teach their children healthy core beliefs about hope and trust, will and autonomy, purpose and initiative, competence and industry, fidelity and identity, love and intimacy, caring and pride in accomplishment, as well as wisdom and integrity. They keep their promises.

### **Exercise**

*Circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Model how to suit up, show up, listen, participate, and let go of the results.
2. Model and teach your Inner Child healthy core beliefs (hope and trust, will and autonomy, purpose and initiative, competence and industry, fidelity and identity, love and intimacy, caring and productivity, and wisdom and integrity).
3. Teach your Inner Child how to set limits and enforce boundaries.
4. Keep your promises.

## **C. Loving parents show their love in how they communicate with their children**

Loving parents speak to their children gently and respectfully. They guide their children through the tiny steps of learning new things to ensure success. They cheer their children on to the next step and applaud their progress. They re-teach by breaking tasks into smaller increments so the children will succeed, tell the children how much they admire their efforts, and summarize the process the children used to do the task. Praise, not punishment and shame, is used to encourage their children. They address misbehavior by pointing out the behavior their children can change rather than shaming their children. They immediately and gently provide appropriate consequences for misbehavior. They teach their children that through honest self-evaluation, planning, hard work, and follow-through, they can accomplish most things. They teach their children to keep a healthy balance each day between work and play.

### **Exercise**

*Circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Speak to your Inner Child gently and respectfully.
2. Guide your Inner Child through the tiny steps of learning new things, ensuring success.
3. Cheer your Inner Child on to the next step and applaud the progress.
4. Reteach by breaking tasks into smaller increments so your Inner Child will succeed.
5. Praise the efforts of your Inner Child and restate the process of the task.
6. Use praise, not punishment and shame, to encourage your Inner Child.
7. Point out misbehavior your Inner Child can change.
8. Work with your Inner Child to come up with appropriate, immediate consequences for misbehavior by your Inner Child (including an apology, ways to atone, and changes in behavior).
9. Teach your Inner Child that through honest self-evaluation, planning, hard work, and follow-through, they can usually accomplish most things.
10. Teach your Inner Child to keep a healthy balance each day between work and play

#### **D. Loving parents protect their children**

Loving parents allow their children to freely express themselves and explore, but they are ever vigilant to keep their children healthy and safe. Loving parents allow their children to make mistakes, fail, and be disappointed at times.

##### **Exercise**

*Circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Keep your Inner Child safe as he/she freely expresses him/herself and explores.
2. Allow your Inner Child to make mistakes, fail, and be disappointed.

#### **E. Loving parents respect their children by listening to them**

Loving parents make time each day for their children. They focus on and listen to what their children need and want from them. They hear the words and tone and read the body language. They ask their children clarifying questions.

##### **Exercise**

*Circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Make time to listen to your Inner Child.
2. Focus on and listen to what your Inner Child needs and wants from you.
3. Hear the words and tone and notice the body language of your Inner Child.
4. Ask your Inner Child pertinent questions to clarify your understanding.

#### **F. Loving parents appropriately reassure and encourage their children with touch**

In their mothers' wombs, children experience full-body hugging. Upon birth, children are swaddled and lovingly cradled. Their parents look them directly in the eyes and murmur sweetly to them. As children grow up, appropriate hair tussling, shoulder squeezes, hand-holding, back pats, hugs, and respectful massage (head, face, neck, shoulders, back, hands, and feet) are appropriate. Good parents touch their children with love and respect.

##### **Exercise**

*Circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Tussle your Inner Child's hair.
2. Squeeze his/her shoulder.
3. Hold his/her hand.
4. Pat your Inner Child on the back.
5. Hug your Inner Child.
6. Occasionally massage your Inner Child (head, face, neck, shoulders, back, hands, and feet).

### **G. Loving parents guide their children through grieving**

When a beloved person or pet dies, someone moves away, or a child's hopes have been dashed, loving parents express their feelings in healthy, safe, acceptable, and productive ways. They carefully show and guide their children through the grieving process.

#### **Exercise**

*Circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Model how to feel and express feelings in safe, acceptable, and productive ways.
2. Help your Inner Child work through the process of grieving (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance).

### **H. Loving parents raise their children to work through life stages naturally**

Healthy families experience disappointments, setbacks, losses, and woes, and good parents show their children how to feel, share their feelings, and work through the process of grieving (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance). They teach their children to experience their own feelings and express those feelings in acceptable and productive ways.






#### **Exercise**

*Circle the things you already do as your own Loving Parent for your Inner Child. For recovery, start doing the things for your Inner Child that you did not circle.*

1. Learn about the stages of emotional development
2. Work through unresolved stages of emotional development

**Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week – What Loving Parents Do; What You Can Do**  
*Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information and exercises as well as the activities below with your sponsor, a program friend, and/or participants at a meeting. Ideally, over time, you will work through all the unresolved issues addressed in this chapter.*

What is one thing you can do this week in each category below to help your Inner Child?

What Loving Parents Do	What I, as My Own Loving Parent, Will Do for My Inner Child This Week
 Ensure child has a solid emotional foundation	
 Help Inner Child find own identity	
 Meet Inner Child's Needs (Love Me, Protect Me, Hear Me, Hug Me, Heal Me)	
 Model & share own grief	
 Complete incomplete life stages	





## **Learn to Be Your Own Loving Parent – Chapter 3**

**Question: How can we learn what loving parents do for their children?**

### **Reading**

In ACA meetings people shared various methods they have used to learn how to be good parents to their Inner Children. They took note of how their parents behaved. They used what was nurturing, but sometimes did the opposite of what they felt was their parents' bad behavior. Sometimes they adopted the behavior of good parents modeled in movies and on television. Sometimes they saw examples of good and bad parenting in public places and may have adopted the healthy behaviors. Sometimes they read books about healthy parenting and took parenting classes.








### **Exercise - What's Your Story?**

*Briefly share what you have learned about good parenting.*

1. Watching how my parents behaved and adopting what I thought was right
2. Watching how my parents behaved and adopting what I thought was wrong
3. Seeing parenting in movies and on television shows
4. Emulating parents of friends and relatives
5. Seeing good parenting behavior in public places
6. Reading parenting books
7. Taking parenting classes

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week – Learn to Be Your Own Loving Parent

Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information and exercises as well as the activities below with your sponsor, a program friend, and/or participants at a meeting. Ideally, over time, you will work through all the unresolved issues addressed in this chapter.

	What is one...	Your Responses
	1. Example of good parenting by your Mom or Dad?	
	2. Example of parenting by Mom or Dad you will not use raising your child(ren)?	
	3. Example of good parenting seen on TV or in a movie?	
	4. Example of good parenting you saw from someone's parent growing up?	
	5. Example of good parenting you saw in a public place?	
	6. Title and author of one parenting book and where you can get it?	Title: Author: Location:
	7. Agency, address, & phone # where you can enroll for a class on Parenting?	Agency: Address: Phone: Date & time of first class:



## Learn to Recognize & Communicate with My Inner Child – Chapter 4

**Question: How can I recognize and communicate with my Inner Child?**

### Reading

Our Inner Children emerge when we experience traumas that are too overwhelming for us to emotionally process. Emotionally we fragment or compartmentalize parts of our personality. Without parental modeling, instruction, tools, or support to work through the events that we thought would seriously harm us or someone we loved, we become emotionally stunted.

We may block out the traumatic events and forget them, but they still are recorded in our unconscious mind. They rise up automatically and immediately when similar things happen in our lives. Listed in the exercise below are some ways we have contact with our Inner Children.

### Exercise - Ways I Recognize , Communicate With, and Connect With My Inner Child(ren)

*In the interests of time, allow only one person to share per topic on his/her experience with his/her Inner Child.*

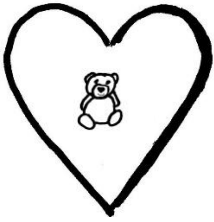
- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Activities / play / toys of children                  | 7. Recognizing our own childlike behavior                               | 13. Experiencing strong feelings (anger, joy, fear...) |
| 2. Daily writing or journaling                           | 8. Rages and tantrums   | 14. Triggered memories                                 |
| 3. Drawing with crayons (or other art forms)             | 9. Role play Loving Parent & Inner Child conversation                   | 15. Visualization / Guided Meditation                  |
| 4. Non-dominant handwriting                              | 10. Self-meditation   | 16. Unusual or illogical behavior                      |
| 5. Photos of ourselves as children                       | 11. Positive sensory stimulants – visual, auditory, taste, smell, touch | 17. Wants, urges, and yens                             |
| 6. Procrastination or inability to make decisions or act | 12. Spontaneous, playful activity                                       | 18. Withdrawing, isolating, and being depressed        |

*These are techniques you can use in recovery to connect with your Inner Child.*

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week - Recognize & Communicate with My Inner Child

Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information and exercises as well as the activities below with your sponsor, a program friend, and/or participants at a meeting. Ideally, over time, you will work through all the unresolved issues addressed in this chapter.

Put an X on each way you connect with your Inner Child during the week:

<b>Activities</b> – do children's activities or adult versions of them – parties, play days, sports, gardening, building...	<b>Gut Punch</b> - Write down troubling incidents you encounter this week, your feelings, & how you reacted	<b>Sensory Auditory</b> - What pleasant things did you hear this week? What memory did you recall?	<b>Sensory Visual</b> - What pleasant things did you see this week? What memory did you recall?	<b>Wants, Yens, &amp; Urges</b> – What unrelenting desires arose? What did you do? What might have evoked them?
<b>Art</b> - Create art (draw, paint, sculpt, craft...)	<b>Meditation / Visualization</b> – meditate about or visualize your Loving Parent talking with your Inner Child	<b>Sensory Smell</b> - What pleasant aromas/scents did you smell this week? What memory did you recall?	<b>Talk Each Morning</b> - Set a time for each and every morning to talk to your Inner Child for 10 minutes. What time did you set? How many mornings did you keep your commitment?	<b>Weird Behavior</b> – When did you act in ways you found odd or strange? What happened just before that?
<b>Childhood Photo</b> -Talk to the child in a photo of yourself as a small child	<b>Mired</b> – note times you cannot get yourself to do something or you put something off		<b>Talk Each Night</b> - Set a time for each and every evening to talk to your Inner Child for 10 minutes. What time did you set? How many evenings did you keep your promise?	<b>Withdraw or Isolate</b> – When did you withdraw or isolate this week? What triggered your reaction?
<b>Dance</b> - Move to music	<b>Reacting</b> – note one time you acted out like a mad, hurt, or fearful child and what triggered that	<b>Sensory Taste</b> - What pleasant things did you taste this week? What memory did you recall?	<b>Talk Throughout the Day</b> – When you suddenly feel angry, afraid, sad, confused, or stunned, talk briefly talk with your Inner Child to calm him/her, resume activity, and thoroughly discuss it during evening talk.	<b>Write</b> - Write notes to your Inner Child with your dominant hand; answer as your Inner Child by writing with your non-dominant hand
<b>Game</b> – play child's game or adult version of it	<b>Run, Jump, Laugh, Wiggle</b> - When did you act silly, loose, and carefree this week?	<b>Sensory Touch</b> - What pleasant touch did you receive from someone this week? What memory did you recall?	<b>Toys</b> – play with child's toy or adult version of it	<b>Write</b> - Write poem, story, or song



## Meet Your Inner Child Visualization – Chapter 5

**Question: How can you meet your Inner Child?**

### Reading

Visualization is a helpful tool that gives participants actual images of their tiny Inner Children. That image allows us to more readily accept the Loving Parent-Inner Child idea.

Some of us have found that when we actually meet our Inner Children, they are wary of us. This is understandable. Once we were adults, we continued to surround ourselves with people who mistreated us as our parents and caretakers had. Worse, we mistreated ourselves. Our Inner Children know that and do not trust us.

When we began our Inner Child work, some of our Inner Children did nothing, waiting to see if the abuse would finally stop. They were willing to give us a chance. All our Inner Children really want is our love, our attention, and our commitment to stop the insanity. Others release their pent-up rage, much like a real three-year-old who screams, “I hate you! I want to kill you.” Their frustration with us is understandable. In the end what they REALLY want from us is love, protection, true attention, and guidance to grow up emotionally so they can live happy, healthy, functional lives.

### Exercise - Meeting Your Inner Child Through Visualization

*As someone reads the narrative for the visualization, you may choose to participate or not. If at any time you begin to feel uncomfortable, you may stop participating, too. A program person has been designated to talk you through your discomfort. If you continue feeling discomfort after this experience, you may want to get professional help from a counselor or therapist.*



## Visualization

We are going to do some guided imagery so you can meet your Inner Child today. Seat yourself comfortably. Sit up straight. Relax your arms. Uncross your legs, and put your feet flat on the floor. Relax.

Close your eyes now. Inhale slowly and notice how you are breathing. Inhale; exhale slowly. Inhale deeply; exhale slowly. Feel your breathing coming from the bottom of your lungs. Breathe in and breathe out slowly and evenly. Breathe in; breathe out. Breathe in; breathe out.

Today you are going to explore a cavern not far away. It is a beautiful, sunny day with blue skies and white, puffy clouds. It's not too warm, and it's not too cool. A gentle breeze caresses your face. You hear birds chirping. As you walk along the path toward the cavern, you see butterflies flitting near the wild flowers and lush, green grass. You see brown squirrels chasing each other up and down a huge oak tree as you pass.

You walk up and down the gentle slopes of the path. You come to the entrance of a cave. As you walk forward and descend into the cave, the tunnel opens up into a subterranean room. Light reflects from an iridescent pool casting beautiful, translucent, dancing silhouettes on the cavern walls.

You make your way to the pool on the cavern floor. As you approach the pool, you see a little child perched on the other side of it dangling his or her feet into the water. When you stop, you notice what the child looks like, how the child is dressed, how old this child is, and the child's facial expression and body language.

You inadvertently kick a stone with your foot. The little child looks up toward the noise and sees you. The child watches as you approach your side of the pool.

You smile and wave to the child. You say hello and tell the child your name. You wait for the child to respond. You notice how the child behaves toward you. You tell this child you are happy to meet him or her. You ask this child how he or she feels about meeting you. You tell the child how happy you are to see him or her. Then you ask, "Is there anything can I do for you right now?" You wait for an answer and respond to the child.

Then you tell the child that you need to leave but promise that you will talk again, soon and often. You listen to the child's response, say goodbye, turn, and walk across the cavern floor. Reaching the stairway, you turn back, wave to the child, and climb up the stairs out of the cave. You emerge into the world of dancing butterflies and brown squirrels chasing one another.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

## Debriefing

*Pair up with a partner. Both partners address each question before going on to the next question. You have ten minutes to discuss these 5 questions.*

1. How do you feel right now?
2. What feelings came up when you saw your Inner Child?
3. What happened when you talked with your Inner Child? How do you feel about that?
4. Did you set up a time, date, and place to meet again?
5. What do you want to tell your Inner Child the next time you meet?

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week - Inner Child Visualization

*Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information and exercises as well as the activities below with your sponsor, a program friend, and/or participants at a meeting. Ideally, over time, you will work through all the unresolved issues addressed in this chapter.*



1. **Talk Each Morning** - Set up a time each morning and meet with your Inner Child. Tell him/her how much you love him/her. Talk about what is expected to happen. Discuss feelings about that. Consider ways to be most effective.



2. **Talk Each Night** - Set up a consistent time each evening and talk with your Inner Child about your experiences throughout the day, how your Inner Child felt about them, what your Inner Child is proud of, and what your Inner Child wants to do better if a similar situation arises.



## What Does Your Inner Child Want From You? – Chapter 6






**Question: How Can You Prove to your Inner Child you will Finally Be a Loving Parent?**

### Reading

If we ask our Inner Children what they want from us, each one will give us some variation of: “Love me, protect me, hear me, hug me, and heal me.”

### Exercise - What Your Inner Child Wants From You

Take a few minutes to fill in the chart below and then go around the room and share on each topic.

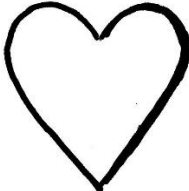




My Inner Child Tells Me	How are you showing this to your Inner Child? <i>Circle those that you are already doing</i>	What is one thing you will do to reassure your Inner Child?
 Love Me	<b>SHOW YOUR LOVE</b> Schedule time to communicate daily Plan to play daily In a mirror tell your Inner Child you love him/her Praise and reward good behavior give Provide something he/she wants	
 Protect Me	<b>PROTECT YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Remove unsafe people, places, and things Stand up for yourself and your Inner Child Set strong limits and enforce boundaries	
 Hear Me	<b>LISTEN TO YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Communicate every morning and night Ask questions and listen to the answers Note your strong reactions Be aware pf pumping adrenaline Notice numbness Be aware of feeling cold Notice symptoms of shock	
 Hug Me	<b>HUG YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Offer to hug someone each day Accept hugs from safe people Get a massage Hug yourself, pillows, stuffed animals, and pets Pet animals in petting zoos Give service in programs Volunteer in your community Designate a home meeting. Get a support system	
 Heal Me	<b>HEAL YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Build a solid emotional foundation Define your identity Grieve your losses Complete life stages not yet completed	



## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week - What Your Inner Child Wants From You

Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information and exercises as well as the activities below with your sponsor, a program friend, and/or participants at a meeting. Ideally, over time, you will work through all the unresolved issues addressed in this chapter.

Fill in the last column with one thing you will do this week to meet each of your Inner Child's needs.

My Inner Child Needs From Me		This Week for my Inner Child
<b>SHOW YOUR LOVE</b> Schedule time to communicate daily Plan to play daily In a mirror tell your Inner Child you love him/her Praise and reward good behavior give Provide something he/she wants		
<b>PROTECT YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Remove unsafe people, places, and things Stand up for yourself and your Inner Child Set strong limits and enforce boundaries		
<b>LISTEN TO YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Communicate every morning and night Ask questions and listen to the answers Note your strong reactions Be aware of pumping adrenaline Notice numbness Be aware of feeling cold Notice symptoms of shock		
<b>HUG YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Offer to hug someone each day Accept hugs from safe people Get a massage Hug yourself, pillows, stuffed animals, and pets Pet animals in petting zoos Give service in programs Volunteer in your community Designate a home meeting. Get a support system		
<b>HEAL YOUR INNER CHILD</b> Build a solid emotional foundation Define your identity Grieve your losses Complete life stages not yet completed		



## **Building a Relationship with Your Inner Child – Trust – Chapter 7**

**Question: How can you build trust with your Inner Child?**

### **Reading**

Our Inner Children, like flesh-and-blood people, assess what we say and do to them and others. They have been quietly watching us for years. They know when we allowed others to abuse them. They know when we have abused them.

We know what they want from us as their loving parents. They want to be loved, protected, heard, reassured physically of our love, and guided to grow up emotionally into happy, healthy adults. Our job in recovery is to become the loving parents they want who will do those things.

To that end, our first job is to actively, daily, work to become trustworthy. Trust depends on communicating clearly, being reliable, being respectful and sincere, being honest, being consistent, keeping commitments we make, and being competent.

### Communicate Clearly

One way some of us survived in our dysfunctional homes was to respond to parents and caretakers without actually saying anything that could get us in trouble. We learned to mumble. We learned to obfuscate. We gave “answers” that did not have any bearing on the questions we were asked, or we changed the subject. We learned quickly not to take a moral position or venture any definitive viewpoint that could be used as evidence against us. In recovery, we learn to clearly say what we mean and mean what we say.

### Be Reliable

We could not depend on our parents or caretakers in our childhood homes. In program recovery, we become people others can depend on. We regularly show up on time, suitably dressed, with the knowledge, experience, and tools to do the tasks we are given. We do the tasks efficiently and effectively in a timely manner.

### Be Respectful

Dysfunctional people with deep-rooted, unresolved anger are sometimes disrespectful. This often warns others to leave them alone or suffer the consequences. In program recovery, we learn to treat ourselves and others with respect. We trace our anger back to its childhood roots, then we grieve our losses. We reparent ourselves to make certain that the words we say are from our hearts.

### Be Honest and Sincere

Growing up, we often heard parents and caretakers fibbing, telling half-truths, omitting important information, and outright lying to us, one another, and others. They said one thing, but did another. They cheated. They stole. They blamed others for what they did. Some of us adopted those family rules. In recovery, we challenge our sense of superiority as well as our

inferiority. We tell the truth. We align what we believe with what we think, say, and do. When we catch ourselves being dishonest, we stop, analyze our words or behavior, make amends, and then practice new words and behaviors that represent what we sincerely believe and think.

### Be Consistent

We grew up in homes where adults or caretakers behaved erratically. In recovery, we turn that around and learn to behave consistently. Our views on people, places, and things remain consistent regardless of circumstances. We solve problems, make decisions, and work towards goals following a sane process each time. Our values, thinking, words, and behavior all match.

### Keep Commitments

We grew up in homes where promises were broken constantly. In recovery, we take steps to ensure that promises we make to our Inner Children and others are kept. Before we make any commitment, we consider if we want to do it and why we want to do it. We decide if we have the time, the energy, enthusiasm, and resources to do it. If we decide to make the commitment, we follow-through, do it, and keep our promises.

### Be Competent








Many of us were told as children to do things we did not know how to do. Parents and/or caretakers did not show us what to do or what steps to take to do what we were told to do. In recovery, we become aware of our strengths and limitations. We freely admit what we can and cannot do. We make sure we are able to do the things we volunteer to do by, for example, taking classes to learn how to do things or asking others for direction.

### When We Become Trustworthy, We Can Trust Ourselves

As our own Loving Parent, we provide for our Inner Children's needs of love, protection, communication, acceptance, and guidance growing up. We become trustworthy by clearly speaking. We become reliable, respectful, honest and sincere, and consistent. We keep the promises we make. We are competent to do the things we do.

## Exercise – Ways to Show My Inner Child and Others I Can Be Trusted








Circle the statements in the last 2 columns that are true for you.

How to Become Trustworthy	I Will NOT	I Will DO This
 <p><b>Communicate Clearly</b></p>	<p>Mumble Babble to avoid confrontation Change the subject Free associate without answering the question Lie about or minimize my needs/wants Agree or keep silent when I disagree Assume others read my mind</p>	<p>Say what I believe Correct erroneous assumptions of others about me Verify what I think someone says</p>
 <p><b>Be Reliable</b></p>	<p>Show up late or not at all Dress inappropriately to do the task Take on a job I do not know how to do Take on a job I don't have experience to do Take on a job I don't have the tools to do Put off doing the job Do part of the job and leave Take the job and do nothing</p>	<p>Show up on time, regularly Dress for the occasion Have or get the knowledge for the task Have or get experience to do the task Have or get the tools to do the task Do the task efficiently &amp; effectively Do the task in a timely manner</p>
 <p><b>Be Respectful</b></p>	<p>Treat others disrespectfully Treat myself disrespectfully Be impolite Mock or demean others</p>	<p>Trace own anger to childhood roots Grieve the losses of childhood incidents Treat ourselves with respect Treat others with respect</p>
 <p><b>Be Honest and Sincere</b></p>	<p>Fib, lie, or tell half-truths Omit important information Say I will do one thing but do another Cheat on anyone Steal Say or do insincere things Blame others for my actions Convince ("gaslight") others to doubt their senses</p>	<p>Challenge my sense of superiority Challenge my sense of inferiority. Tell the truth; say what I mean Align my thoughts, words, and actions with my beliefs When I m dishonest, I will stop, analyze my behavior, make amends, and change my behavior</p>
 <p><b>Be Consistent</b></p>	<p>Behave erratically</p>	<p>Behave consistently Express my true views Follow a sane process to solve problems, make decisions, and work towards goals Match my thoughts, words, and behavior with my true values</p>
 <p><b>Keep Commitments</b></p>	<p>Break my commitments Break my promises</p>	<p>Keep my promises Before commitment, I will consider if I want to do it consider why I want to do it decide if I have the time, energy, enthusiasm, and resources If I make the commitment, I do it</p>
 <p><b>Be Competent</b></p>	<p>Volunteer to do things without knowing how Do things without knowing how Plow through a job without analyzing it Start a job without having a plan</p>	<p>Become aware of my strengths Become aware of my limitations Admit what I can and cannot do Volunteer for things I know how to do Get training or seek help to do things I do not know how to do</p>

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week - Building Trust with Your Inner Child

Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information and exercises as well as the activities below with your sponsor, a program friend, and/or participants at a meeting. Ideally, over time, you will work through all the unresolved issues addressed in this chapter.

In the second column, list one negative thing you will stop doing this week. In the third column enter one thing you will start doing to earn the trust of your Inner Child.

How to Become Trustworthy	I Will NOT	I Will DO This
 <b>Communicate Clearly</b>		
 <b>Be Reliable</b>		
 <b>Be Respectful</b>		
 <b>Be Honest and Sincere</b>		
 <b>Be Consistent</b>		
 <b>Keep Commitments</b>		
 <b>Be Competent</b>		



## **Build a Relationship with Your Inner Child – Communication – Chapter 8**

**Question: What do you want to say to your Inner Child?**

### **Reading**

#### Communication Basics

Inner Children often tell us, “I want ice cream, a new computer, or a Ferrari.” An Inner Child may constantly say, “Gimme,” but what that really means is “Pay attention to me!” Inner Children throw tantrums when Loving Parents break promises. This results in the adult procrastinating, taking risks, and destroying relationships (to name a few).

Our relationships with our Inner Children improve as we treat them with more respect. They quickly and automatically tell us if we are hurting them in some way. When they do, we, the Loving Parents, need to stop, make amends, and change our behavior.

They will also tell us when other people are abusing them so we can confront the abusers or get away from them.

Working with our Inner Children will allow us to be more productive, have more fun, and become more serene.

#### Converse Honestly

Trust-building requires our Loving Parents to have an honest, one-to-one conversation with our Inner Children. After introducing ourselves, we have simple conversations with our Inner Children. The conversation topics vary depending on the ages of the Inner Children who emerge.

#### Topics of Loving Parent Led Conversations

1. How lucky I am we are finally meeting
2. How sorry I am about past abuse from me or others
3. How sorry I am that even as an adult I allowed myself and others to continue the abuse
4. Promise to stop any further abuse
5. Make amends to my Inner Child
6. Keep my promises to my Inner Child
7. Promise to deal with difficult situations by talking openly and honestly with my Inner Child (ask gentle questions, listen and accept responses, and answer questions)
8. Promise to love, protect, listen to, hug daily, guide safely through grief of the past, and help complete life stages

#### Considerations in Communicating with Inner Children

- How to Communicate: gently; clearly; honestly; openly
- Forms of Communication to Use: verbal; written; fine arts; physical expression (dance, sports, role play...)
- Communicate Regularly: morning and/or evening
- Communicate When Circumstances Arise: feelings triggered; problems come up; you withdraw, isolate, or act out; perception of limited time or urgency to solve a problem

- Ways to Talk: out loud, inside your head, or through movement, body language, facial expression, or gesture
- Topics to Discuss with your Inner Child:
  1. Problem that came up that day and how to solve it
  2. Strong feeling that came up that day, trigger for it, and how to deal with it
  3. Own acting out or withdrawing from others, trigger for it, and how to resolve it
  4. Feeling overloaded and unable to deal with a particular problem
  5. Noticing that you discounted your Inner Child
  6. Awareness that you allowed someone to violate your boundaries
  7. Fear that you will fail
  8. Fear that you will succeed
  9. Needs and wants of Inner Child AND Loving Parent
  10. Steps to take to make better decisions
  11. Steps to take to solve problems
  12. How to play more
  13. How to work smarter
  14. How to work on ACA recovery
  15. What to focus on first in putting your life in order
  16. How to have fun
  17. Keeping promises



### **Exercise - Loving Parent Talks with Inner Child**














*Roleplay these scenes with another person where one is the Loving Parent and one is the Inner Child.*

1. Introduce yourself to your Inner Child.
2. Tell your Inner Child how good you feel to finally meet him/her.
3. Apologize for hurting your Inner Child.
4. Tell your Inner Child how you will change your behavior to avoid hurting him/her further.
5. Tell your Inner Child how you will atone for hurting him/her.
6. Apologize for letting others hurt your Inner Child.
7. Explain how you will stop letting others hurt your Inner Child further.
8. Tell your Inner Child how you will atone for allowing others to hurt him/her.
9. Promise respectful, open, and honest communication.
10. Ask your Inner Child what he/she needs and wants.
11. Tell your Inner Child what you need and want from him/her.
12. Promise you will love, protect, listen to, hug, and heal your Inner Child daily.

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week - Communicate with Your Inner Child

Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information and exercises as well as the activities below with your sponsor, a program friend, and/or participants at a meeting. Ideally, over time, you will work through all the unresolved issues addressed in this chapter.

Circle, check, or write in your answer to the question in each row.

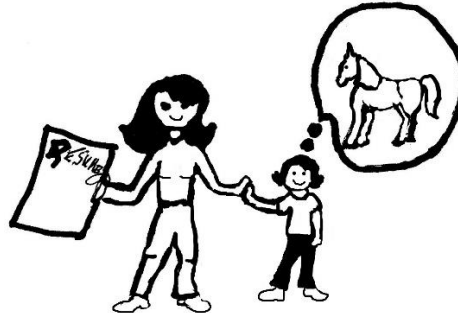
How will you connect with your Inner Child?	    Other_____
When will you talk to your Inner Child?	   24/7         Other_____
Make notes when triggered, problems come up, you withdrew or acted out, or made bad decisions in haste; share your thoughts	 Other_____
Favorite way to talk to your Inner Child	     Other_____
Some things to talk about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Topics in the exercise about introducing yourself to your Inner Child</li> <li>○ Problem that came up that day and how to solve it</li> <li>○ Strong feeling that came up that day, trigger for it, and how to deal with it</li> <li>○ Own acting out or withdrawing from others, trigger for it, and how to resolve it</li> <li>○ Feeling overloaded and unable to deal with a particular problem</li> <li>○ Noticing that you discounted your Inner Child</li> <li>○ Awareness that you allowed someone to violate your boundaries</li> <li>○ Fear that you will fail</li> <li>○ Fear that you will succeed</li> <li>○ Needs and wants of Inner Child AND Loving Parent</li> <li>○ Steps to take to make better decisions</li> <li>○ Steps to take to solve problems</li> <li>○ How to play more</li> <li>○ How to work smarter</li> <li>○ How to work on ACA recovery</li> <li>○ What to focus on first in putting your life in order</li> <li>○ How to have fun</li> <li>○ Keeping promises</li> </ul>





## Building a Relationship with Your Inner Child – Negotiation – Chapter 9

**Question: How do you negotiate with Your Inner Child?**



### Reading

Loving Parents and Inner Children have equally important needs and wants. By the time we are adults, we have discounted the needs and wants of our Inner Children for a very long time. When we ensure that the needs and wants of the Loving Parents and Inner Children are met, we grow up naturally into unified, functional people.

Healthy negotiating is a learned skill that we practice in recovery. In ACA recovery, the point of negotiating is not to “win.” It is for both parties to get their needs met.

If the adult needs to finish reports for work or get the laundry done, the Loving Parent initiates a deal with the Inner Child. The Loving Parent tells the Inner Child (s)he needs to get the work done. The Inner Child might want to play computer games or go shopping for a new automobile. They negotiate so both get their needs or wants met. The dialogue might go like this:

Loving Parent: I need to finish these reports this morning, Sweetie Pie.

Sweetie Pie: I want to go look at new cars instead.

Loving Parent: How about you let me get these reports done, and then we can go look at new cars at the dealership this afternoon after lunch?

Sweetie Pie: Okay, but only if I get to buy one today.

Loving Parent: I can't afford to buy a new car today, but we can try to find the one we will get when I have the down payment in the bank. You can pick the color of the one we eventually get. All right?

Sweetie Pie: Candy apple red! I want candy apple red!

Loving Parent: If you let me work on these reports now, you get candy apple red when we do buy the car.\*

*\*The Loving Parent needs to keep the promises made in order to maintain the trust of our Inner Children.*

As our own Loving Parents, we respond to the desires of our Inner Children as we would if we were dealing with actual children. Generally, our Inner Children just want attention and reassurance. When actual children ask for ponies, parents automatically divert attention to something else, like coloring books of horses or plastic horses. So it is with our Inner Children. It isn't the objects that are important; it is our undivided attention that our Inner Children really want. So we give our Inner Children the attention they desire

### Exercise: Conversation between an Inner Child and a Loving Parent

*For each scenario below, two volunteers negotiate so both can get their needs or wants met.*

	INNER CHILD WANTS	LOVING PARENT WANTS
1.	Pizza	Fulfilling job
2.	Trip to the Super Bowl	Reliable transportation
3.	Expensive sports car	Upscale, low-maintenance home
4.	African lion	A good relationship

	INNER CHILD NEEDS	LOVING PARENT NEEDS
1.	Bath	Clean house
2.	Nutritious meals	Pay bills
3.	Help to learn something new	Get a better job
4.	Practice caring for animal	Get to work on time

### Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week - Negotiate with Your Inner Child

*Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information and exercises as well as the activities below with your sponsor, a program friend, and/or participants at a meeting. Ideally, over time, you will work through all the unresolved issues addressed in this chapter.*

Read the scenario below. Then read the conversation between you, the Loving Parent, and your Inner Child. After that you will simply identify the key aspects of that negotiation.

#### Scenario

Your boss, Robert, told you to develop a computer program that will allow the corporation to pay contract employees in many nations for their time. This includes making automatic monetary conversions which change constantly, deducting pertinent taxes for the country, and reporting the wages to the governments of each employee.

When the system you created was debuted, the Corporate CEO commended Robert on his great work. Robert thanked the CEO and accepted a promotion and a substantial raise in salary. Robert did not mention your work.

You were furious but politely left the celebration. As you left the room, you kept repeating to yourself inside your head, "I need to keep quiet right now, get away from here, get back home, and sort this out so I can continue working for this corporation; I need to pay the rent." On the way home you, as an ACA in recovery, decided this was an opportunity to communicate with your Inner Child!

### ***The Conversation Between the Loving Parent (LP) and the Inner Child (IC)***

LP	Thank you for allowing us to get out of that situation quietly. I know that was really hard for you. Tell me now how you are feeling.
IC	I'm going to pummel that ratfink so bad his mommy won't recognize him. What a creep! I do all the work, and that son-of-a-pea-picking-poliwog gets the promotion AND the raise. And THEN, and THEN he doesn't even bother to give me an honorable MENTION!!!!????!! Ratfink. I'm gonna drop some baking soda and vinegar in his next cup of coffee!
LP	I hear how angry you are, Little One. You have every right to be furious. But I am wondering if there is a way for us to get through this, still keep my job that pays well enough to keep the lifestyle we lead and get you the recognition for your hard work. It won't help either one of us to do anything that will get us fired or arrested. So let's use all the energy from your anger to get creative and take care of both our problems, okay?
IC	How about telling Robert you encoded a way to dismantle the whole computer system if he doesn't announce your contribution and give you a raise?
LP	Blackmail? No. Let's put all that energy into some kind of POSITIVE solution.
IC	Right now I just want to yell at someone, break something, fight someone.
LP	(yelling angrily) I want to yell! I want to break something! I want to fight someone to the death! I want to yell! I want to break something! I want to fight someone to the death! I want to yell! I want to break something! I want to fight someone to the death!
IC	That's it! That IS what I want!
LP	I can see that. After dinner we can go over to the batting cages and hit some balls. Does that sound good?
IC	Pizza for dinner and busting some balls, too? Sounds great to me!
LP	Let's figure this out before dinner, though. You want recognition. Me, I just want to keep doing the job I love doing so we can live as well as we do. How about I schedule a meeting with Robert to RESPECTFULLY explain that I would like him to give me the credit for designing the system that lead to his promotion and raise. You would have to keep quiet, really quiet, no matter what he responds. Are you willing to do that?
IC	What if he says, "no?"
LP	Then I will start telling people in the company of how proud I am of the new computer system I designed. I can do that in the lunchroom within hearing distance of Robert's supervisor, too. We will get your recognition.
IC	Okay. I will keep my lips super-glued together.
LP	Promise? If you don't, I am likely to be fired.
IC	I promise! We will keep your job.

### ***Identify Key Aspects of a Successful Negotiation with Your Inner Child***

Questions	Your Answers
1. Who needs to begin the conversation?	
2. Who needs to express his anger?	
3. Who needs to acknowledge and guide the healthy expression of anger?	
4. Who needs to figure out a way to release the anger in a positive way when it is still festering?	
5. What does the Loving Parent need?	
6. What does the Inner Child need?	
7. What does the Loving Parent propose?	
8. Why does the Inner Child agree?	
9. Who wins?	

*Answers in Appendix B*



## Build a Solid Emotional Foundation - Chapter 10

**Question: How do I build a strong emotional foundation for my Inner Child?**

### Reading

With a strong, solid emotional foundation, our Inner Children can grow up emotionally. Without it, we keep building our lives on shifting sands and wondering why we fail.

In recovery, Loving Parents ensure that their Inner Children get all their physiological, safety and security, loving and belonging, esteem, and actualization needs met.

### Exercise – How I Provide my Inner Child with a Solid Emotional Foundation






*In column 1, circle any item listed that your Inner Child is getting enough of from you. In column 2, note those items not circled in column 1. In column 3, write your plan to supply it. Example: You circle everything except “sleep” in column 1. In column 2, you jot down “sleep.” In column 3, you decide to stop drinking coffee after 10 am daily.*

Inner Child's Needs	Basic Needs My Inner Child Lacks	One Thing I Will Do to Supply It
<b>Physiological</b> Clean Plentiful Air Food Water Shelter Clothing Sleep Warmth Intimacy		
<b>Safety &amp; Security</b> Mind Body Employment Resources to live comfortably Health Worldly Goods & Property		
<b>Love &amp; Belonging</b> Love Friendship Intimacy Family / Program Family Connectedness		
<b>Esteem</b> Respect Self-esteem Social Status / Rank Recognition Strength Freedom		
<b>Freedom to Be &amp; Become</b> Explore Learn Grow Reach Potential		

## Things You Can Do in Your Recovery This Week - Build a Solid Emotional Foundation

Share your insights and feelings about this chapter's information and exercises as well as the activities below with your sponsor, a program friend, and/or participants at a meeting. Ideally, over time, you will work through all the unresolved issues addressed in this chapter.

Put an X on all the statements in the grid that are true for you. Write N.A. for "Not applicable." Work on one area of recovery you did not cross out.

	<b>AIR</b> The air I breathe is clean, pure, and abundant	<b>FOOD</b> The food I eat is nutritious	<b>SHELTER</b> I live in a clean, safe, temperature-friendly shelter	
<b>CLOTHING</b> My clothes are clean, well-fitted, and appropriate for my activities	<b>SLEEP</b> I get enough, uninterrupted, and restorative sleep	<b>INTIMACY</b> My intimate relationships are legal, consensual, respectful, reciprocal, and mutually satisfying	<b>MIND</b> I keep mentally healthy & alert by learning new things; I keep mentally safe by avoiding toxic people, places, things, and information	<b>BODY</b> I keep healthy by eating nutritiously, exercising regularly, seeing doctors and dentists often, taking my prescriptions, keeping my home safe, and avoiding unhealthy people, places, and things.
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b> I enjoy a safe, mentally stimulating job I have the aptitude and skills to do. I can study and work to elevate my responsibilities and salary.	<b>ASSETS</b> I have the savings, income, investments, possessions, and property I need to live comfortably.	 <b>BUILD YOUR EMOTIONAL FOUNDATION</b>	<b>PROPERTY</b> I keep my property and/or investments in order, well-maintained, and paid up or paid for.	<b>FRIENDS</b> I keep in contact with my close friends regularly and work at maintaining our friendships.
<b>INTIMACY</b> I have loving, reciprocal, warm, respectful, and intimate relationships with a few special people.	<b>FAMILY</b> I recognize the virtues of my parents and siblings. I work hard to maintain healthy relationships with the family I have today.	<b>BELONGING</b> I am grateful for the people and programs that give me opportunities to volunteer and give service for the things I believe in.	<b>RESPECT</b> I work at being the person whose core values, thoughts, words, and actions match so I can respect myself and others can respect me.	<b>SELF-ESTEEM</b> I am a wonderful person. As a child of my Higher Power, I was perfect the day I was born. I value and respect who I am.
<b>STATUS</b> I have status in my home, neighborhood, work, program, and community because I have earned respect and trust from others.	<b>RECOGNITION</b> I am recognized for my strengths and contributions in my home, neighborhood, work, program, and community	<b>STRENGTH</b> I am building a solid emotional foundation which gives me the support I need to live my life fearlessly and positively.	<b>FREEDOM</b> I allow myself to say and do what I want to say and do, go where I want to go, and take care of my own needs and wants.	<b>EXPLORE</b> I am allowing myself to freely explore people, places, and things.
	<b>LEARN</b> I am free to learn new things and ways to do new things.	<b>GROW</b> I am allowing myself to grow up emotionally and take on the responsibilities of adulthood.	<b>REACH POTENTIAL</b> I allow myself to use all my intellect, experience, aptitude, and intuition to become all I can be.	

## MEETING FORMAT USING THIS WORKBOOK

### OPENING (30 minutes)

Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Welcome to the Own Loving Parent meeting of Adult Children of Alcoholics.

1. In this meeting we read “The Problem” or the “Laundry List.” You belong here even if your parents were not alcoholic if you identify with these common characteristics of adult children.
2. We meet here to share the experiences we had as children growing up in alcoholic or dysfunctional homes, how it infected us then, and the affect it has on our lives today. By practicing the 12 Steps, by focusing on “The Solution,” and by accepting a Higher Power of our own understanding, we find freedom from the effects of our childhood environment of alcoholism and family dysfunction. We identify with “The Problem” and learn to live in “The Solution,” one day at a time.
3. Please, let us have a moment of silence for all ACAs who have not yet found recovery, after which we will recite the ACA Serenity Prayer:

**God, grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change;  
the courage to change the one I can; and the wisdom to know that one is me.**

4. Will someone please read:
  - The Problem or The Laundry List
  - The Solution
  - The 12 Steps
  - The 12 Traditions
5. Let’s go around the room and introduce ourselves by first name only, please.
6. We do not break for refreshments at this meeting, but you may help yourself quietly during the meeting to whatever refreshments are available. This meeting ends at \_\_\_\_\_.

### ***Read only if Service Dogs that have not been here before are present:***

- We are getting more people bringing legitimately certified service dogs to meetings that are allowed by law to be here, and we welcome you and your service animal. We have the responsibility to this facility that allows us to meet here to safeguard their premises.
- We also need to be able to share our experience, strength, and hope without distraction or intrusion. We need to remember that many ACAs have severe medical conditions, hair-trigger allergies, and PTSD reactions to unwanted, unexpected touch from animals such as contact sniffing, licking, nuzzling, and lunging.
- We ask you to walk your dog and dispose of waste before the meeting. Please keep your dog calm and quiet. Sit near an exit to remove your dog if (s)he becomes audibly or physically restless. Keep your dog on a short leash next to you during the meeting, and take your dog with you if you exit the room.

7. If this is the first ACA meeting for you, please raise your hand and tell us your name. We ask you to do this because we want to get to know you. (*Give newcomers literature & Welcome chip.*)

***Read only if Newcomer is present:***

- This program is not easy, but if you keep coming back to these meetings, you will start to come out of denial. This will give you freedom from the past. You and your life will change.
- Many of us could not recognize or accept that some of our current attitudes or behaviors result from our childhood experiences related to alcoholism or family dysfunction. Having not yet solved the mystery of our own selves, we often behave as adult children without realizing it.
- By attending 6 meetings in a row at the beginning, and attending regularly thereafter, we come to know our real selves and learn to behave responsibly. We do this by identifying with the listing of characteristics that we read in “The Problem” and “The Laundry List.”
- In ACA: We learn to live in The Solution and choose to become our own loving parents. We come out of denial and share the pain of our childhood memories. We experience love and acceptance from members of our ACA group. We become aware that feelings of the past and present form a pattern; and we learn that the pattern can change. Newcomers get Recovery and Service Sponsors to assist them on a faster track of recovery.
- So, please, keep coming back. Listen, learn, and, most of all, share your feelings.

**8. 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition / Announcements**

- It is now time for our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, which states, “Every ACA group should be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”
- Does the meeting Secretary have any ACA announcements (*Intergroup meeting/business meeting*)? Does anyone else have ACA-related announcements?

**WORKBOOK (30 minutes)**

1. This is what our Inner Children want from us - repeat after me:  
**Love me; protect me; hear me; hug me; heal me**
2. This meeting is focusing on becoming our Own Loving Parents to our Inner Children. When using the Reparenting workbook, we share on the question of the chapter, read the passages given in the workbook, do the exercises, and read the “homework” section. Turn to page \_\_\_\_.

**REPARENTING I DID THIS WEEK**

Now it is the time we each share for about one minute on what we have done in the past week as Loving Parents to our Inner Children.

**OPEN SHARING (30 minutes)**

We are about to open the meeting for sharing on the topics of our choice. We need to remind ourselves about the cross talk rules and, if newcomers are here, explain the progression of sharing we do in ACA.

- **Cross Talk** - Everyone is encouraged to share. So that as many people as possible can share, please limit your sharing to 3 to 5 minutes, and, as a courtesy, we ask that everyone be given a turn during each part of our meeting. If you do not want to share, please say, “Pass”, so we don’t keep waiting for you to speak. Please, do not cross talk, distract from the speaker, or otherwise interrupt.

- **Sharing In ACA** *read only if newcomers are present*

In ACA, if we do not share, we cannot heal.

It is important for newcomers to share no matter how haltingly, incoherently, or disorganized. Telling our stories out loud allows us to hear our problem, recognize it, and validate that truth.

What we share about depends on where we are in our recovery process. As time goes along, our sharing evolves. The first topic is generally what brought us to an ACA meeting. Following that our sharing takes on various functions.

1. In the beginning, we often wail, complain, cry, rant, rave, blame, and whine; this is a necessary stage that brings us out of denial. When we speak our thoughts aloud, we actually see we have a problem and what it is. Until we make our discomfort real by voicing it, we cannot recognize our problem so we cannot solve it.
2. When we start sharing our problems, feelings start to rise within us, and we begin to learn how to express them.
3. We describe how we overreacted to a situation and our feelings about it.
4. We describe our current problem and our feelings about it.
5. We trace our feelings about a current situation back to a similar problem we experienced as children, recognizing that neither have been resolved.
6. We talk about possible solutions to resolve the childhood problem and the current problem.
7. We commit ourselves to a plan of action to solve the past and present problems.
8. We share our healing as we progress.
9. Finally, we share on topics introduced by others; we describe our own problem, how it was rooted in the past, and how we resolved the past and present problems. In this way we affirm our own recovery and display for our fellows that recovery happens in ACA.

- This meeting is now open for sharing.

## CLOSING

1. Will someone please read “The Promises?”
2. We sometimes go to a local coffee shop or meet at a park for fellowship directly after this meeting (or the business meeting if we have one today). You are invited.
3. This is a fellowship of recovering adults intended to complement, not replace, other 12-Step programs. You are encouraged to attend your other 12-Step recovery support groups during the week to support your recovery journey.
4. Please respect the confidentiality and anonymity of each person here. We have trust and confidence that what we share with you at this meeting will remain here at this meeting. Who you see here, what is said here, when you leave here, let it stay here.
5. Will all, who care to, join me in the ACA Serenity Prayer?



