

ACA ABC Delegate Handbook

As of March 31, 2022

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	2
BECOMING AN ABC DELEGATE	5
RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DELEGATE	6
BEFORE THE ABC	6
DURING THE ABC	7
AFTER THE ABC	7
DELEGATE RESOURCES	8
Delegate Checklist	8
Delegate Training Sessions	9
Mock Proposal Sessions	9
Delegate Meet and Greet	9
Group Voting and Substantial Unanimity–Twelfth Concept	9
Sharing at Business Meetings	10
Allow Everyone to Express Views (Handbook For Adult Children Section III)	10
REFERENCES	10
Operating Policy and Procedures Manual (OPPM)	10
ACA World Service Organization (adapted from the BRB)	11
The Suggested Commitment To Service	12
(Handbook For Adult Children Section III)	12
The ACA Twelve Steps with Spiritual Principles	13
The ACA Twelve Traditions with Meditations	14
Twelve Concepts for ACA World Service	16
Serenity Prayer(s)	18
ABC Mantras That Work	18

INTRODUCTION

This Handbook is a reference guide for Delegates to the Annual Business Conference (ABC) of Adult Children of Alcoholic and Dysfunctional Families (ACA). It contains information that is relatively static, which means it will not necessarily change from year to year.

Delegate Engagement Subcommittee

The Delegate Training Sub-Committee (DTSC) was created in 2016 during the ABC in Delray Beach, Florida. It was renamed Delegate Engagement Subcommittee (DESC) in 2022. Our mission is to serve as a resource to help educate ABC Delegates. We provide information on how to prepare for attending the ABC. Additionally, we educate Delegates on how to encourage and inform their groups about practicing the Traditions and Concepts and holding group consciences.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Annual Business Conference (ABC)?

- ❖ The ABC, generally held annually in April, is where the ACA Fellowship has the opportunity to send a Delegate to represent their Meeting, Group, Intergroup, or Region to discuss and vote on fellowship business, including:
 - Various issues related to the business of the ACA World Services Organization (WSO), including those brought forth by the Fellowship through the Ballot Proposal Process and/or through a Floor Motion and/or by the WSO Board of Trustees.
 - Reviewing reports of the work of the WSO and its committees over the past year, and ask any questions as time allows;
 - Ratifying Board Members for the WSO Board of Trustees – see the [Operating Policy and Procedures Manual \(OPPM\)](#) Appendix IV and ACA WSO [Bylaws](#) Article IX.5;
 - Ratifying Committee Chairs (see [OPPM](#) p 23).
- ❖ To access the Minutes from the previous ABCs, please browse the info from each prior ABC [here](#).

What is an ABC Delegate?

- ❖ An ABC Delegate is an elected representative of a registered ACA Group, Meeting, Intergroup, or Region who serves to communicate the voice of the group to the WSO at the ABC. They are given the autonomy to vote in a manner that represents their group's conscience to the best of their ability, taking into account any new information that is presented. (see [Concept III](#))
- ❖ See more at ACA WSO [OPPM](#) p 42.

What is the importance of attending the ABC?

- ❖ Attending the ABC provides the opportunity for a group to have a voice according to the Right of Participation as stated in The [Twelve Concepts](#).

- ❖ Every group/intergroup/region is encouraged to elect a Delegate to represent their group conscience via voting at the ABC per [Concepts](#) I, II, III, VI, and XII.

How does a group select a Delegate?

- ❖ Groups or meetings are autonomous and can decide for themselves who their Delegate shall be. It is suggested that the Delegate have been a regular meeting attendee for at least a year and will be able to attend the ABC, either in person or virtually, as well as attend one of the Delegate Training sessions. The ideal time to vote in a Delegate is in May at the group's business meeting.

Can an individual be a delegate for more than one group?

- ❖ No, an individual can only serve as a Delegate for one registered group, whether it's a meeting, an Intergroup, or a Region.

Can a group have more than one delegate?

- ❖ An individual group may have only one registered Delegate at a time. Two individuals may alternate holding the position of voting Delegate for their group as long as they are both registered and have indicated how they will share their responsibilities, e.g., person A will cover the first day and person B will cover the second day.

What is the term of service for a Delegate?

- ❖ A Delegate serves from one ABC to the next ABC. It is suggested that a Delegate serve two consecutive terms for the sake of continuity, although each group or meeting is autonomous in making this decision. In our experience, the Delegate is learning ropes in their first term and feeling more confident in their second term. It is important to consider rotation of service as is suggested for all group positions and The Suggested Commitment to Service (see [References Section](#))

How do I register to attend the ABC as a Delegate?

- ❖ Delegates register on the ABC Website.

Can a non-delegate observe the ABC?

- ❖ Yes. We offer a virtual live stream of the ABC for non-delegates.

How do I register to be a non-delegate observer of the ABC?

- ❖ Observers register on the ABC website.

What are Ballot Proposals?

- ❖ Ballot Proposals are the specific actions or changes being sought from WSO, submitted by ACA Groups/Intergroups/Regions to be considered by Delegates as part of the agenda at the upcoming ABC. (See more at the [OPPM](#), p 44-46)

What does it mean to be a registered group, meeting, Intergroup, or Region?

- ❖ This means these groups have officially informed the WSO of their existence, and they are listed on the WSO website.

Does a meeting or group have to be affiliated with an Intergroup or Region to have a Delegate?

- ❖ No.

How does an in-person Delegate pay to attend the ABC?

- ❖ Depending on the financial condition of the meeting, Intergroup or Region, partial or full reimbursement of expenses to the ABC is encouraged. Some groups pass a separate basket in addition to the Seventh Tradition basket to fund a Delegate.

If our group or meeting is unable to participate in the ABC, is it still advantageous to have a Delegate?

- ❖ Yes, it is definitely advantageous for a group or meeting to have a Delegate. A Delegate keeps the group informed of the workings of the WSO and the ABC as well as the need and opportunities for service work.

When is the ABC Agenda available?

- ❖ Typically, the second week of April.

What is the ACA World Service Organization (WSO)?

- ❖ ACA WSO is a service body and a legal entity.
- ❖ The Fellowship created the WSO in 1991 to operate the day-to-day business, such as literature development and production. Per the [Bylaws](#) (see Article IX.4), during the ABC, the Fellowship gives direction to the WSO.
- ❖ See more in [Concepts](#) VI and VII

What are the Concepts, how do they relate to the ABC, and why are they important?

- ❖ The [Twelve Concepts](#) outline the relationship between WSO and the larger Fellowship. If the Twelve Steps are a guide to personal recovery work, and the Twelve Traditions are principles regarding organizing groups and service bodies, the [Twelve Concepts](#) are fundamental guiding principles around how the WSO ought to function and how it ought to relate to the Fellowship.
- ❖ Some of the ACA Twelve Concepts that outline the role of the ABC in the relationship between the Fellowship and the WSO include Concept I, Concept II, Concept VI, Concept VII, and Concept XII.
- ❖ Board trustees sign a document saying they will follow the Concepts of service during their terms.

What is the “Inverted Pyramid”, and how does that relate to the ABC?

- ❖ The “Inverted Pyramid” is a term used across various 12-step programs. It is a fundamental principle regarding the relationship between service bodies (Intergroups, Regions, and WSO) and the entities that they serve (groups and individual members).
- ❖ The principle of the “Inverted Pyramid” specifies that decisions about the direction for those service bodies (including WSO) are to be made in a democratic fashion, by (representatives of) those they serve.

- ❖ From the ACA WSO [Bylaws](#) (IX.4) *The group conscience obtained from the delegates in attendance shall provide direction, recommendations, and/or Special Committees to the Board for conducting the business of ACA WSO.*

What is “The Conference”?

- ❖ There are two ways in which that phrase, “the Conference”, is used in English:
 - The event
 - The set of people serving as Delegates at the event
- ❖ Each Delegate serves, collectively, with all other Delegates, at the ABC as “The Conference.”

Where can I submit a question not answered here?

- ❖ Your questions are important! Email the Delegate Engagement Subcommittee at dtsc@acawso.org. We appreciate the opportunity to add further questions and answers to this Handbook.

BECOMING AN ABC DELEGATE

Each ACA Group or Meeting is autonomous and decides by group conscience who their Delegate shall be. It is highly recommended that the Delegate have been a regular meeting attendee for at least a year and will be able to attend one of the Delegate Training sessions prior to attending the ABC.

Term Of Service for a Delegate

A Delegate’s term is determined by their individual group. While it is important to have a one-year minimum that runs from one ABC to the next ABC, a minimum of two years is suggested for continuity. Many Delegates have also expressed that their first year was primarily about understanding the process.

When rotating out, a Delegate is asked to mentor the incoming Delegate, sharing the DESC resources, including previous Delegate Binders. The Delegate Binder is a file containing extensive information about the agenda, schedule, proposals, procedures, and reports that will be presented to the Delegates at the ABC.

The Buddy System

We have a Buddy System available for newer Delegates to be paired with more experienced Delegates. This process is intended to provide support and guidance for understanding the ins and outs of the ABC, both before and during the event. Email us at dtsc@acawso.org to be matched with a Buddy. It’s never too late to begin this relationship, even during the ABC.

Funding an ABC In-Person Delegate

Depending on their financial circumstances, groups are encouraged to provide partial or full reimbursement of their Delegate’s expenses for in-person attendance at the ABC. While online attendance is always an option, your Delegate’s physical presence offers many benefits, including the opportunity to more fully see how we are a global organization by meeting

members from other countries, and to get different perspectives about how the program can work. If your group is unable to financially support your Delegate, they are encouraged to be there if they are able to afford it themselves. Fundraising events or additional 7th Tradition collections may be considerations for supporting your Delegate.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DELEGATE

BEFORE THE ABC

Upon your acceptance to perform service as a Delegate to the ABC, familiarize yourself with the contents of this Handbook.

Review [The Twelve Traditions of ACA](#) (see BRB Chapter 19), [The Twelve Concepts for ACA World Service](#) and [The Suggested Commitment to Service](#). These are also included at the end of this document for ease of reference.

On the WSO Service Website you will find the latest version of the [Operating Policy and Procedures Manual \(OPPM\)](#), a document that reflects the day-to-day operating guidelines for the WSO Board of Trustees, WSO Committees, and the ABC.

As a registered Delegate, you are welcome to join the WSO Slack Workspace. Please contact the DESC at dtsc@acawso.org to be invited to the Delegate Channels. Slack is an online collaborative communication forum used by WSO. If you prefer not to use Slack, you may elect to communicate by email only. When the ABC is able to meet in person, Delegates can choose to be physically present or attend virtually. Discuss with your group the possibilities for reimbursement of any in-person expenses.

August, September, October

In August, the Ballot Prep Committee sends the “Call for Proposals” to each registered ACA Meeting contact person. The meeting contact person will follow up on whether the group would like to submit a Proposal. The deadline to submit a Proposal will be included in that email and posted on the WSO Service Website.

A Proposal is an idea or issue presented by a group or committee to help clarify the mission of the Fellowship. Ideally, the Delegate or secretary will guide the discussion of crafting a proposal at your Meeting, Group, Intergroup, or Region.

By October, the ABC and ACA World Convention (AWC) website, ACAWorldConvention.org, will be live. Information for Delegates will be provided and registration will begin at this time.

Note: For a completely virtual ABC and AWC, this will be available after January 1st.

November, December

Delegates are invited to attend the WSO Board monthly teleconference to get better acclimated to what is going on in WSO. They are held on Zoom on the second Saturday of every month at 2:00 pm Eastern US Time (<https://acawso.org/monthly-telecon/>). If you are comfortable doing so, consider introducing yourself as a Delegate at the monthly teleconference.

January, February, March, April

In January, an email is sent to all registered group contacts that includes the Proposals submitted to the Ballot Prep Committee. Each group is asked to discuss and vote on whether these Proposals merit discussion at the ABC.

In late January and early February, the Ballot Prep Committee holds virtual Town Hall meetings to provide an opportunity for Proposal submitters to briefly explain their Proposals and answer questions.

In mid-February, a link to the Ballot is sent to the contact persons for all registered groups so they can enter their votes. The Ballot deadline is March 31st. More information about the Proposal and Ballot processes are at <https://acawso.org/category/ballot-prep/>

The dates for the Delegate Training sessions will be posted on the [service website](https://acawso.org) (acawso.org) and registered Delegates are notified by email. It is extremely helpful that all Delegates attend at least one of these teleconferences.

The Delegate Binder is available online approximately a month prior to the ABC. Delegates will find it helpful to familiarize themselves with the content, especially the Committee Reports. In reviewing these reports it would be a good idea to make note of any questions or clarifications you may need. The Proposals that are on the ABC agenda will also be included in the Binder.

***Note:** A hard copy of the Binder is available for a nominal fee when the ABC is in-person.*

DURING THE ABC

The first order of business that is asked of the Delegates is to confirm the Conference Chair. Thinking of our [Concept IX](#), this is another place where the fellowship participates and the Trustees choose “good service leaders, with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them.”

We will have the services of a Parliamentarian to assist the Conference Chair and the Delegates in following procedures.

It is recommended that you take notes to help you prepare your Delegate report for your group.

The results of the Ballot determine which Proposals are added to the ABC Agenda. The conference delegation decides whether the Proposals become motions.

The conference delegation is asked at the ABC to ratify (confirm) the individual members of the Board for the coming year.

AFTER THE ABC

Provide your group with your ABC report and include the voting results on the Proposals. Delegates frequently confer on Slack to assist each other with this task.

Please contact the Delegate Engagement Subcommittee (DESC) at dtsc@acawso.org with questions regarding the role of the Delegate.

Sample Delegate's Report from the Annual Business Conference

Suggested Format:

Date: _____

Prepared for (Group #) _____

Prepared by: _____, Delegate

Number of Delegates in Attendance: _____ Number of Countries Represented: _____

Details:

Things to consider for your report:

We suggest reviewing the Conference agenda and consider what your group may like to know. Among other things, this could include:

- Financial reports
- Literature projects for fellowship review
- Available service opportunities
- Ballot Proposal outcomes
- Motions and outcomes
- Committee Reports
- Confirmation of Board Members
- Our plan for next year's ABC

DELEGATE RESOURCES

Delegate Checklist

- If you are a new Delegate, request a "*Delegate Buddy*"
- Familiarize yourself with the WSO Slack workspace
- Attend a Board Monthly Teleconference
- Check the Service Website often to find updates at acawso.org
- Familiarize yourself with the Ballot voting schedule
- Attend a Delegate training session to learn the voting process and experience a mock proposal
- Acquaint yourself with the *Delegate Binder* prior to the ABC
- Take notes and actively participate at the ABC
- Write an ABC Report to take back to your group.
- Complete the Delegate Survey after the ABC.
- Consider volunteering for a WSO Committee, Region, or Intergroup
- Attend at least two Board Monthly Telecons per year <https://acawso.org/monthly->

[telecon/](#)

- ❑ **After your first ABC**, consider volunteering as a “Delegate Buddy”

Delegate Training Sessions

Training sessions are held prior to the ABC to educate Delegates about their role at the conference. During these sessions, essential information is delivered to the Delegates as well as addressing questions and concerns. While most of the information is geared towards the newer Delegate, it is highly recommended that experienced Delegates also attend because the information does change from year to year.

Mock Proposal Sessions

A mock proposal is used as a training tool to explain the process of voting on a proposal at the ABC. This simulation has been helpful as a teaching tool to prepare Delegates for the actual experience at the ABC. Questions and concerns are addressed during these sessions and help the WSO facilitate the business more efficiently at the conference.

Delegate Meet and Greet

This is an opportunity for Delegates to become acquainted with other Delegates. One or more fun activities will be part of this session. In addition to the weeks leading up to the ABC, Delegate Meet and Greets are scheduled throughout the year.

Group Voting and Substantial Unanimity–Twelfth Concept

(Handbook For Adult Children Section III)

Most ACA groups conduct business meetings with some form of rules of order or general consent. ACA groups are cautioned to avoid too much formality in conducting business meetings. Typically, a chairperson leads the business meeting, recognizes motions, and oversees discussion on the motions. Each person at the business meeting usually shares once on the motion before the chairperson asks if the group is ready to vote on the motion.

Some groups are more informal. They do not make motions or vote formally. Instead, the group discusses a topic or issue until a general consensus is reached by the group. In this form of business meeting, the chairperson of the meeting would listen to the discussion among the group and sense when a consensus is reached. The chairperson would then state that consensus to see if there is agreement with those attending the business meeting. The chairperson might say: “I sense that the group has decided to change the meeting time from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.” If the group agrees then consensus is reached; the decision is made. In determining a consensus, the chairperson states the consensus in an impartial manner and remains open to the will of the business meeting participants.

There is a principle from our Twelve Concepts for ACA World Service known as “substantial unanimity.” The Twelfth Concept states: “that all important decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.” Substantial unanimity applies to the most important business of meetings, Intergroups, and Regions, in addition to the Annual Business Conference. Substantial unanimity means that decisions reached by ACA meetings or service bodies need to reflect the clear will of the group. Each group and service committee must decide the “important decisions” that require substantial unanimity. Substantial unanimity is always greater than a simple majority and should exceed a two-thirds majority of those voting on the ACA business at hand. If agreement cannot be reached, it is best to postpone action on the motion or topic.

The election of service committee members typically is settled by a simple majority vote, which is acceptable and well below substantial unanimity standard. There are other examples of ACA business being settled by a simple majority. But we are always mindful of the need for substantial unanimity on business of greater importance.

Sharing at Business Meetings

(Handbook For Adult Children Section III)

Because our program focus is on recovery, ACA members occasionally attend business meetings to share their feelings without addressing the issues for discussion. While feelings are an important part of our recovery, we have found that it is best to share on the business at hand because of the limited time that most business meetings operate under. At business meetings, we ask questions, listen, and think about our response before speaking. That said, ACA business meetings are not without emotion. Some ACA members speak with feelings and compassion while staying on the topic and without acting inappropriately in the meeting. We ask that children not be brought to a business meeting so that disruptions can be avoided. This is true for our Inner Children because they, too, need attention and are equally disruptive in meetings. If a person is at a business meeting and realizes he or she has not negotiated a settlement to keep the Inner Child from misbehaving at the meeting, then that person needs to excuse himself or herself from the meeting to negotiate or renegotiate with the Inner Child. By taking care of our Inner Child, we are better able to participate in group business. The chairperson of the business meeting can ask individuals who act out to leave unless they can conduct themselves in accordance with the rules of order, discuss only the business at hand, and accept the group conscience processes, deliberations, and decisions gracefully.

Allow Everyone to Express Views (Handbook For Adult Children Section III)

Keep in mind the right of everyone to express an opinion. Participating in a business meeting allows us to practice learned recovery tools. The minority opinion is important. There should be an emphasis on obtaining a group conscience of all the participants on all issues, particularly when there is disagreement. A group conscience is the method by which we invite a loving God into our group decisions and discussions. The group comes to an agreement on a given business item after each person has expressed his or her views. An agreement or course of action may not appear after the first round of discussion. If so, the chairperson of the business meeting asks for more discussion among the group members until a consensus is reached.

Some groups will use a combination of the consensus discussion approach and entertaining formal motions. A motion is a statement made by an individual attending the business meeting. The motion calls for an action to be taken by the group. The person might say: "I make a motion to change the meeting time from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m." If a motion is made and seconded by the group members, there is usually discussion and then a vote is taken. General motions are usually passed by a simple majority. More serious motions such as removing someone from office or changing the meeting time can require a two-thirds majority.

REFERENCES

Operating Policy and Procedures Manual (OPPM)

[Latest OPPM](#) - *This document is regularly updated.*

ACA World Service Organization (adapted from the BRB)

ACA WSO is a non-profit organization of volunteer members that includes elected trustees, special workers (employees), and committed ACA member volunteers who serve on our committees. We are incorporated in the State of California, U.S.A., and are responsible for following the corporate laws of that state.

WSO provides a sense of common purpose, stability, and continuity for meetings, Intergroups, and Regions. By serving as a central point of group communication, the WSO encourages unity and similarity among ACA meetings. ACA WSO coordinates meeting information worldwide. It is one place where ACA groups and the general public can find information, literature, and locations of meetings.

The mission, the singleness of purpose, of WSO is to carry the message of recovery to all who suffer from being raised in an alcoholic or other dysfunctional environment.

ACA WSO maintains a telephone line, postal address, Internet website, and e-mail addresses as a stable communication base for the ACA program. ACA WSO committees prepare the literature for conference approval, prepare (newsletters and reports), coordinate group outreach, and provide public information.

The ACA WSO Board of Trustees oversees WSO and its operations. The Board is made up of board members from ACA Regions, Intergroups, and meetings. The ACA trustees hold a monthly teleconference to conduct ACA business during the conference year. To listen in on the teleconference, one needs an access number that is available by contacting WSO or by locating that number on the WSO website. The ACA WSO Board of Trustees holds multiple in-person and/or virtual meetings per year, including the Annual Business Conference.

The Suggested Commitment To Service (Handbook For Adult Children Section III)

I perform service so that my program will be available for myself, and through those efforts, others may benefit. I will perform service and practice my recovery by:

1. Affirming that the true power of our program rests in the membership of the meetings and is expressed through our Higher Power and through group conscience.
2. Confirming that our process is one of inclusion and not exclusion; showing special sensitivity to the viewpoint of the minority in the process of formulating the group conscience so that any decision is reflective of the spirit of the group and not merely the vote of the majority.
3. Placing principles before personalities.
4. Keeping myself fit for service by working my recovery as a member of the program.
5. Striving to facilitate the sharing of experience, strength, and hope at all levels: meetings, Intergroups, Regional committees, service boards, and World Services.
6. Accepting the different forms and levels of service and allowing those around me to each function according to their own abilities.
7. Remaining willing to forgive myself and others for not performing perfectly.
8. Being willing to surrender the position in which I serve in the interest of unity and to provide the opportunity for others to serve; to avoid problems of money, property, and prestige; and to avoid losing my own recovery through the use of service to act out my old behavior, especially in taking care of others, controlling, rescuing, being a victim, etc.
9. Remembering I am a trusted servant; I do not govern.

The ACA Twelve Steps with Spiritual Principles

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

The ACA Twelve Traditions with Meditations

Tradition 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on ACA unity.

Tradition 1 Meditation: *Higher Power. I am your trusted servant seeking to support my ACA group and its primary purpose. Please remind me that the life of my program and my own recovery depends upon my willingness to put the group's welfare above my own will. Help me recognize unity.*

Tradition 2: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Tradition 2 Meditation: *Higher Power. I understand that you make your voice heard in a group conscience. I ask you to remind me that the life of my program and, therefore, my own recovery depends upon my willingness to put the group's welfare above my own will. Where I disagree with the common view of my fellows in service, allow me to state my case honestly and respectfully. Allow me to listen to and consider the views of others. May I state my view and support all group decisions, including the ones I might disagree with. Your will, not mine, be done.*

Tradition 3: The only requirement for membership in ACA is a desire to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family.

Tradition 3 Meditation: *Higher Power. Help me recognize my desire to recover from the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional home. Give me willingness to attend meetings to recover from these effects. I participate in ACA because I want to change and help others. Thank you for leading me to these rooms where I belong. Thank you for giving me the courage to walk into an ACA meeting and stay and find my place. I am finally home. I finally know where I fit.*

Tradition 4: Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other Twelve Step programs.

Tradition 4 Meditation: *Higher Power. Help my home group remain focused on the Twelve Step process of recovery while still having its own personality and flavor. When the actions and decisions of my group might affect ACA as a whole, may we find the spirit of cooperation and a willingness to seek help from the ACA service structure. My group is autonomous, but it is not alone.*

Tradition 5: Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.

Tradition 5 Meditation: *Higher Power. Help me remember that ACA has one primary purpose, which centers the fellowship and which simplifies most discussions. Help me remember to ask myself a simple question when I am doing the business of ACA. 'Does what we are about to do support the primary purpose of carrying the ACA message to another adult child needing help?'*

Tradition 6: An ACA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the ACA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Tradition 6 Meditation: *Higher Power. Grant me the wisdom to know when a group project will carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer, or will direct group energy away from carrying the message. Guide us away from discussions about property, prestige, or endorsing causes that are not ACA. Give me the courage to speak clearly and thoughtfully for what I believe honors Tradition Six.*

Tradition 7: Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Tradition 7 Meditation: *Higher Power. I am here to do your will. Help me give for the right reason with the right amount. Help me remember that I have a different life today because of ACA. May I be willing to give back what was freely given to me. May I claim spiritual ownership in this fellowship.*

Tradition 8: Adult Children of Alcoholics should remain forever non- professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Tradition 8 Meditation: *Higher Power. Remind me that the direction of our program comes from the ACA members and the groups. Remind me that we must make our own decisions. Guide us when we discuss the need to hire special workers that will help us fulfill ACA's primary purpose. Grant us the wisdom to make the best decisions for our groups, service structure, and our fellowship as a whole.*

Tradition 9: ACA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Tradition 9 Meditation: *Higher Power. May I remember that ACA and its meeting and service structure are different than my family of origin. May I be patient and avoid reaching for the easiest way out when I am confronted with a difficult situation. Help me and my ACA group ask for help in keeping our meetings safe and recovery-oriented. Also help us celebrate the things that we do right.*

Tradition 10: Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Tradition 10 Meditation: *Higher Power. Help me to honor ACA's primary purpose, and focus my sharing in meetings on topics of recovery. Help me remember that ACA is a spiritual program and not a political, religious, or other type of program.*

Tradition 11: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, films, and other public media.

Tradition 11 Meditation: *Higher Power. I ask you to guide me in maintaining my anonymity at the level of all media because no one speaks for ACA or gives the appearance of speaking for ACA. We attract others to ACA by our good works and the good word of others. Help me discern when I might break my anonymity for a suffering adult child looking for a way out of confusion. This person might be a co-worker or a family member. Help me know when to share some of my story, or when to remain quiet and maintain my anonymity. May I avoid speaking out of turn, or using my ego to share with people who may not be interested in ACA. At the same time, give me courage to share this program when the moment is right.*

Tradition 12: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Tradition 12 Meditation: *Higher Power. Help me see the connecting thread that anonymity brings to the ACA program. Give me the willingness that I need to practice ACA principles instead of a false self personality.*

Twelve Concepts for ACA World Service

(Handbook For Adult Children Section III)

Concept I: The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for ACA World Services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.

Concept II: Authority for the active maintenance of our world services is hereby delegated to the actual voice, the effective conscience for our whole fellowship.

Concept III: As a means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relationship between the ACA meetings, the ACA WSO Board of Trustees, and its staff and committees, and thus ensuring their effective leadership, it is herein suggested that we endow each of these elements of service with the traditional Right of Decision.*

The right of decision as defined herein refers to: 1) the right and responsibility of each trusted servant to speak and vote his/her own conscience, in the absence of any contrary mandate, on any issue regardless of the level of service; 2) the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and the Commitment to Service will be followed by trusted servants in decision making; 3) delegates to the Annual Business Conference are trusted servants and therefore equally guided by the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, 12 Concepts, and the Commitment to Service; 4) standard practice that decisions made by subcommittees are subject to the authority of the service body which creates its mission and defines its parameters. (Footnote p616)

Concept IV: Throughout our structure, we maintain at all responsible levels a traditional Right of Participation.

Concept V: Throughout our structure, a Right of Petition prevails, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of grievances will be carefully considered.

Concept VI: On behalf of ACA as a whole, our Annual Business Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Annual Business Conference also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters would be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the World Service Organization when they act among themselves as the World Service Organization of Adult Children of Alcoholics.

Concept VII: The Annual Business Conference recognizes that the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of the Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization are legal instruments: that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Adult Children of Alcoholics. It is further understood that our World Service Organization relies upon the force of tradition and the power of the ACA purse for its final effectiveness.

Concept VIII: The Trustees of the World Service Organization act in this primary capacity: with respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs.

Concept IX: Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are, at all levels, indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership must necessarily be assumed by the Trustees of the Adult Children of

Alcoholics World Service Organization.

Concept X: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description, or by the Operating Policy and Procedures Manual and bylaws.

Concept XI: While the Trustees hold final responsibility for ACAs World Service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate trustees, executives, staffs, and consultants. Therefore the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

Concept XII: In all its proceedings, Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization shall observe the spirit of the ACA Twelve Traditions, taking great care that the conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no WSO action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the WSO may act for the service of Adult Children of Alcoholics, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the fellowship of Adult Children of Alcoholics which it serves, the WSO itself will always remain democratic in thought and action. (More information about substantial unanimity is available on page 596 of the BRB.)

Serenity Prayer(s)

Traditional Serenity Prayer God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

ACA Serenity Prayer (Chapter 14) 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.

ACA Secular Serenity Affirmation Today I seek 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.

ABC Mantras That Work

As you contemplate your role as a Delegate, consider the following mantras to help you maintain your serenity... after all, the ABC is a business meeting, not a recovery meeting!

- ★ By taking care of my Inner Child, my adult will be more present
- ★ I will trust the process
- ★ I will listen to the opinion of others
- ★ I will use my inside voice
- ★ I have the right to my own opinion
- ★ I will treat others with dignity and respect
- ★ I will be prepared
- ★ I will be honest
- ★ I will keep an open mind
- ★ I will be mindful of my tone when speaking
- ★ I will be happy, joyous and free at the ABC!