

Welcome

Inner Child Non-Dominant Handwriting Workshop



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

The Problem

Many of us found that we had several characteristics in common as a result of being brought up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional household. We had come to feel isolated and uneasy with other people, especially authority figures. To protect ourselves, we became people-pleasers, even though we lost our own identities in the process. All the same we would mistake any personal criticism as a threat. We either became alcoholics (or practiced other addictive behavior) ourselves, or married them, or both. Failing that, we found other compulsive personalities, such as a workaholic, to fulfill our sick need for abandonment. We lived life from the standpoint of victims. Having an overdeveloped sense of responsibility, we preferred to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. We got guilt feelings when we stood up for ourselves rather than giving in to others. Thus, we became reactors, rather than actors, letting others take the initiative.

We were dependent personalities, terrified of abandonment, willing to do almost anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to be abandoned emotionally. Yet we kept choosing insecure relationships because they matched our childhood relationship with alcoholic or dysfunctional parents. These symptoms of the family disease of alcoholism or other dysfunction made us “co-victims”, those who take on the characteristics of the disease without necessarily ever taking a drink. We learned to keep our feelings down as children and kept them buried as adults. As a result of this conditioning, we confused love with pity, tending to love those we could rescue. Even more self-defeating, we became addicted to excitement in all our affairs, preferring constant upset to workable relationships.

This is a description, not an indictment.

The Solution

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

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

This process allows us to see our biological parents as the instruments of our existence. Our actual parent is a Higher Power whom some of us choose to call God. Although we had alcoholic or dysfunctional parents, our Higher Power gave us the Twelve Steps of Recovery.

This is the action and work that heals us: we use the Steps; we use the meetings; we use the telephone. We share our experience, strength, and hope with each other. We learn to restructure our sick thinking one day at a time. When we release our parents from responsibility for our actions today, we become free to make healthful decisions as actors, not reactors. We progress from hurting, to healing, to helping. We awaken to a sense of wholeness we never knew was possible.

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

You will not do this alone. Look around you and you will see others who know how you feel. We will love and encourage you no matter what. We ask you to accept us just as we accept you

This is a spiritual program based on action coming from love. We are sure that as the love grows inside you, you will see beautiful changes in all your relationships, especially with God, yourself, and your parents

Key Terms

- **False - Self** – *The addicted, disassociated, or codependent self. (next person)*
- **Critical Parent** – *The hypercritical and judgmental voice that frequently finds fault in our thoughts and actions. This includes the frequent blaming and shaming of ourselves and others. (next person)*
- **Loving Parent or Reparenting** – *The inner parent we can develop from the part of us that took action to care for ourselves as children and which can be awakened in recovery. The first step in reparenting ourselves involves recognizing the loving voice inside. Our experience shows that every adult child has love inside regardless of what the person says or believes. Love is there and it is original. As we awaken the Loving Parent inside, we remember a simple slogan: “First Things First”. Many adult children rush into Inner Child work without taking time to meet their inner, caring parent. As a result, some of us struggle with finding the Inner Child until we take this necessary step. The Inner Child will not usually emerge until we establish our Loving Parent.*

In some cases, a sabotaging aspect of the Inner Child will emerge if we rush this phase of our recovery. This angry aspect of the Inner Child can overpower the newly developing Loving Parent and delay recovery.

(next person)

By reparenting ourselves, we can further remove the “buttons” that have been pushed by others to manipulate us or to get a reaction out of us. Through a Loving Parent inside, we gain greater independence from codependence. We find the skills and support we need to become independent adults. Healthy adults understand they are responsible for themselves and their actions, but they can also rely on others for help and feedback. Healthy adults develop friendships and relationships with people they can trust. These people form the basis of our support system. These relationships may include members of our family of origin or they may not. (next person)

Inner Child or True Self – Once we become comfortable with affirmations and sharing about being a Loving Parent, we are usually ready to make contact with our Inner Child. For many ACA members, the child within represents our True Self. This is the part of us that is our original being. The Inner Child has original trust, original belief, and original love. The child within understands feelings and the language of a Higher Power. The Inner Child or True Self is present during our spiritual experiences and underpins our spiritual awakening. [\(next person\)](#)

The Inner Child also has all the mental, physical, and historical memory of the family. One of the surest signs that an Inner Child exists is found in the definition of the term “adult child”. An adult child is someone whose actions and decisions as an adult are guided by childhood experiences grounded in self-doubt or fear. Until we get help, we can operate from childhood fear that threatens our jobs and relationships. Under certain conditions, we can revert to childhood states that are age specific

Many adult children have said they feel like a child in a grown-up body. This is a clue to the Inner Child, but there is much more. The childhood fears expressed in adulthood are only a fraction of the full nature of the Inner Child.

[\(next person\)](#)

Family dysfunction drives the Inner Child into hiding, leaving states of fear that wander the adult’s soul. While the Inner Child or True Self can be the spark of our creativity, we must also remember the child is a deeply hurt part of ourselves. Some of us believe the child within can sabotage our current relationships through fear of abandonment and shame. Through recovery, we learned that our Inner Child has an array of protective tools, The tools, however, can lead to self-harm and great emotional pain. We can sabotage ourselves as we seek help. This is a paradox of sorts. The Inner Child or True Self is our original wholeness who believed in people without effort. The Inner Child freely gave love and trust without effort. Yet, as a result of abuse, an angry Inner Child can fuel self-destructive behaviors that we seem powerless to stop at times. [\(next person\)](#)

Inner Child Definitions (continued)

An angry child within can exhibit feelings and behaviors of crippling fear and extreme dishonesty. There can be blistering rage. These feelings or behaviors were necessary to survive the unhealthy family. As adults, when we encounter situations that resemble our childhood experiences, we can be rageful. We can seem to lash out at people or co-workers for no cause. We have shocked people with rage, which comes from this hurt child within. We feel embarrassed by our rage, but we also feel powerless to change. We feel sabotaged. The good news is that this hurt child within will listen if we take the time to build trust and intimacy from within.



Crosstalk Reminder

Cross talk means interrupting, referring to, or commenting on what another person has said during the meeting. We do not cross talk because ACA members often come from family backgrounds where feelings and perceptions were judged as wrong or defective. Remember that sitting quietly while people express their sadness or anger is the support we can offer them. We accept, without comment, what others say because it is true for them. We work towards taking more responsibility in our lives rather than giving advice to others. If you need to, you can always talk to someone or ask questions after the meeting.



Questions to ask your inner child

- What is your Name?
- How old are you?
- What do you like?
- What don't you like?
- What kind of things do you like to do when you play?
- Who do you like to play with?
- What do you like to eat and drink?
- What are your favorite colors?
- What is your favorite room? or place?
- What would you like from me?
- Who is your favorite person from history or the movies and why are they your favorite?
- What would you tell your father or mother if they couldn't hurt you?
- What is one of your favorite memories?
- If you were to go on your dream vacation with anyone (alive or dead), where would you go, who would you go with, and what would you do? Can you draw a picture of you on vacation?
- What has been your favorite adventure or one you would like to experience?
- What feeling or emotion would you like to get rid of if you could?
- If you could lay down on the ground what weather condition would you want to wiggle around in?
- What Language would you want to speak and have fun in if you were given a choice to play for a day?
- If you could ride a go cart what would be the fastest speed you would travel?



Inner Child Affirmations



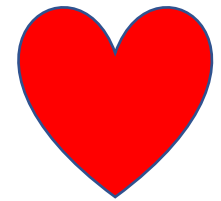
- *I will listen to my Inner Child not with fear but with openness.*
- *I love my Inner Child unconditionally.*
- *I will try to be patient with my Inner Child.*
- *I will use humor with my Inner Child.*
- *I will try to establish trust with my Inner Child.*
- *I will be gentle with my Inner Child.*
- *I will try to do praise exercises with my Inner Child*
- *I will validate my Inner Child's feelings.*
- *I will love this Child for all she or he has had to defend against.*
- *I will negotiate with my Inner Child fairly.*

- *I will look for opportunities to celebrate with my Inner Child.*
- *I will protect my Inner Child to the best of my ability.*
- *I will integrate my Inner Child into my life through play, creativity, and spirituality.*
- *I will respect my Inner Child.*
- *I will try being intimate with my Inner Child.*
- *I will allow my Inner Child to express their feelings and thoughts.*
- *I will try to follow through on promises I make to my Inner Child.*
- *I will take time to become my own Loving Parent.*

ACA Journey

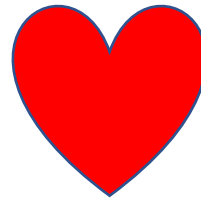
Adult children are survivors and have taken a lot of pride in that identification. Yet we all deserve a lot more than that in our lives. ACA is the path to offer that to us. It is not necessarily an easy path. At times, it can be scary, at times painful. But hang on to the vision of where it leads you. Pay attention to the process, but remember to have fun. Recovery is not about perfection. It is in the becoming that we experience the promises of recovery. Learn to validate yourself by becoming your own loving parent. Don't judge recovery or yourself.

Acknowledge the little steps along the way. In doing so, you will move from shame to self-worth, from secrecy to honesty, loneliness to connection with self and others, and from silence to having a voice. We believe it is through the Twelve Step program of ACA that we no longer live life from a basis of fear. We live with self-care and love.



Closing Thoughts

- Listen to your Inner Child not with fear but openness.
 - Love this child for all she or he has had to defend against.
 - Know that feelings are to be listened to; they are cues and signals that indicate where you are and what you need.
 - Mistakes are a sign of growing; remember, be gentle with yourself.
 - Success is not relative to others. It is a feeling of love and accomplishment for yourself.
 - Recovery is accepting yourself for who you are, no longer waiting for others to define you or approve of you.
- It is safe to take time to play today. Play fuels your creativity, tickles your Inner Child, and nurtures your soul.
 - May you respond with the vulnerability of your child, but with the strength of your adult.
 - Surround yourself with people who respect and treat you well.
 - In faith one finds the strength to survive times of great fear and sadness.



Unity Prayer

(for virtual meetings)

I put my **heart** in yours
and together we can do
what we could never do alone.

No longer is there a sense of hopelessness.

No longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower.

We are all together now,
reaching out our hearts
for a power and strength greater than ours;

and as we join **hearts**,
we find love and understanding
beyond our wildest dreams.

Keep Coming Back. It Works!!!

