



ACA adapted the 12 Steps, Traditions, and Concepts from AA. They are often referred to 3 legs of the stool that support us.

The Steps -> Recovery, Traditions -> Unity, Concepts -> Service

The Principles of the Twelve Traditions

- Tradition One: **Unity**
- Tradition Two: **Trust**
- Tradition Three: **Identity**
- Tradition Four: **Autonomy**
- Tradition Five: **Purpose**
- Tradition Six: **Solidarity**
- Tradition Seven: **Responsibility**
- Tradition Eight: **Fellowship**
- Tradition Nine: **Structure**
- Tradition Ten: **Neutrality**
- Tradition Eleven: **Anonymity**
- Tradition Twelve: **Spirituality**

The Twelve Traditions of ACA are covered in the Bid Red Book on pages 489 to 554. Each tradition has some fellowship shares, insights, questions for writing/sharing, and a Meditation.

WSO has a number of skits that were recorded to demonstrate the traditions.

<https://acawso.org/tradition-skits-audio-downloads/>

and a free download from the 2019 ACA World Convention,

<https://shop.adultchildren.org/products/2019-awc-why-traditions-matter-spiritual-principles-and-the-laundry-list-erin-d-jody-o>

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

Writing / Sharing

1. How do you feel when group members respectfully state their opinions, negotiate with one another, resolve their differences, and agree calmly to disagree respectfully?
2. When you feel yourself getting pulled into an “all or nothing” fight over a program issue, what can you do to change your behavior?
3. What is your group doing right? On a scale of one to ten, how much unity is in your group?
4. How could your group, Intergroup, or ACA committee improve?
5. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition One?

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.

Writing / Sharing

1. What is a “loving God”?
2. Explain the concept of group conscience.
3. Explain the process to arrive at a group conscience decision.
4. Why is the collective wisdom of a group better than the opinion of one person?
5. Describe one successful experience you have had in making a group decision in this program.
6. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition Two?

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.

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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.

Writing / Sharing

1. Using “The Laundry List” or “The Problem,” check off the characteristics that apply to you. Are these the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional home?
2. Select three characteristics you have from growing up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional home. Explain how these traits are exhibited in your daily life.
3. Why do you want to change your life now? What happened that has brought you to ACA?
4. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition Three?
5. What is the only requirement for ACA membership?
6. How does willingness strengthen the only requirement for membership

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.

Writing / Sharing

1. Define “autonomous” as it relates to ACA meetings/groups.
2. If each ACA group is autonomous, then how do they have a consistency in meeting format and message?
3. What is an Intergroup? What is the World Service Organization?
4. In what ways should ACA cooperate with another ACA group or Twelve Step program?
5. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition Four?

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.

Writing / Sharing

1. What is the ACA message?
2. How does the primary purpose of carrying the message to others contribute to group unity and to consistency in ACA meetings?
3. How does the primary purpose help the group avoid controversy with outside issues?
4. What can your group do to carry the message? Suggestions: distribute local meeting directories in the community; put on fund-raising events¹ and donate proceeds to Intergroup and WSO; host recovery workshops or holiday marathon meetings; organize fun events and invite friends and relatives; or take an ACA meeting to a local hospital or institution.
5. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition Five?

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.

Writing / Sharing

1. What does “endorse” mean?
2. What does “finance” mean?
3. What does “lend the ACA name” mean?
4. What is a “related facility?”
5. What is an “outside enterprise?”
6. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition Six?

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.

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

Writing / Sharing

1. What does it mean to be “self-supporting”?
2. If you cannot contribute to ACA with money, how else can you contribute?
3. What is a prudent reserve?
4. What is the importance of supporting ACA service boards and committees?
5. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition Seven?

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.

Writing / Sharing

1. Why must the ACA message remain free?
2. What might happen if we pay individuals to carry the ACA message for us?
3. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition Eight?

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.

Writing / Sharing

1. Who is the ultimate authority in ACA?
2. What is the purpose of a group business meeting? Intergroup? World Service Organization?
3. Why is trust important throughout the ACA service structure?
4. Why should ACA never be too organized?
5. What actions are appropriate in dealing with a disruptive or otherwise unsafe person at an ACA meeting?
6. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition Nine?

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.

Writing / Sharing

1. Define “outside issues.”
2. Why shouldn't ACA take a position on an issue that would bring about improvements for society in general?
3. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition Ten?

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 apolitical, religious, or other type of program.

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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.

Writing / Sharing

1. Explain the differences between attraction and promotion.
2. Why do we choose attraction as our public relations policy rather than promotion?
3. Why is it important to maintain your anonymity with the media?
4. What has happened or what might happen when someone breaks his anonymity with the media?
5. How would you explain anonymity to a newcomer or spousee?
6. What is the spiritual principle in Tradition Eleven?

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.

Writing / Sharing

1. How does placing principles before personalities in Tradition Twelve relate to promoting unity in Tradition One?
2. Identify and list the spiritual principles of each Tradition.

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.

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