

THE EA CONNECTION: APRIL 2019

Your monthly newsletter from ISC

A letter from the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees

Dear EA fellowship members,

The Board of Trustees takes its responsibilities to this organization and its membership very seriously. During the past four years we, along with our Executive Director, have introduced new literature and have updated many of our materials that had not been reviewed for decades. These new and updated pieces have been well received by the membership – people have shared with us that they are pleased to have additional and refreshed material from which to work their program. At this time, we want to respond to some feedback we have received to the changes that were made to Steps 3, 5, 6, 7, and 11 as well as to promise # 12 and tradition # 2. The board voted to make these changes in early 2018 and communicated the changes to the membership through multiple articles in The Connection at that time, based on the belief that most members read this newsletter regularly. We made these changes after a great deal of deliberation, wishing to focus on what the program tells us regarding the importance of spirituality, not religion, as well as to move away from purely masculine terms when considering a Higher Power.

Step 3 was changed in substituting the new words “our Higher Power as we understood this Higher Power” for the former words “God as we understood Him.” Step 5 was changed in substituting the words “Higher Power” for the former word “God.” Step 7 was changed by substituting the words “our Higher Power” for the former word “Him.” Step 11 was changed by substituting the words “our Higher Power as we understood this Higher Power, praying only for knowledge of our Higher Power’s will for us” for the former words “God, as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us.” Promise # 12 was changed by substituting the words “Higher Power” for the former word “God.” Tradition 2 was changed by substituting the words “a loving Higher Power as this Higher Power may be expressed in our group conscience” for the former words “a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.”

Our bylaws clearly state that traditions and steps can be changed if there is approval from AA, which the trustees did request and received permission to change.

The language of He, Him, His, and Himself are all masculine terms that are not helpful for people who do not view their Higher Power as a male. The language of the entire program of EA speaks of a “power greater than ourselves;” it is important that we are clear that how an individual chooses to acknowledge this power – with words like “God” or “the group” or as anything else they find helpful is – and will continue to be - their decision. In the end, substituting Higher Power for God in the steps, tradition 2, and promise 12 has the effect of putting the clear thought behind the whole of EA’s approach to “being a spiritual and not a religious program” as the first thing that people will see when they encounter our program.

The Administrative Concepts and the Bylaws that the trustees must operate under were all followed in making these changes. These guiding documents give the Board the authority to make these changes. A world-wide vote by the EA membership was not required. While these documents have always been available, we will be sharing them with the membership more proactively in the future.

The trustees regret that there has not been a full understanding of the process that we went through and the authority that EA grants to us to make the changes and a full awareness that these changes did take place more than a year ago. Our intention is to continue to communicate as best we can about the work of the trustees on behalf of the EA fellowship. We respectfully request that the work that we are doing under the approved guidelines of EA be honored. As with all feedback provided by the membership, comments about this change are being considered with care. The Board will be undertaking a review of all EA communications to assure that we are using appropriate measures to share all information with the fellowship.

It is important to note that members who use the word “God” when they submit their shares as their experience, strength, and hope will continue to have the freedom to use the word “God.” **We strongly urge people to refer to the power greater than themselves in whatever fashion that suits them, which was the rationale for this change.** Sharing what we perceive our Higher Power to be in our own personal ways is essential.

Yours in the Program,

Scott, John, Derita, Colleen, and Elaine



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TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

STEP 4: MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.

TRADITION 4: EACH GROUP SHOULD BE AUTONOMOUS EXCEPT IN MATTERS AFFECTING OTHER GROUPS OR EA AS A WHOLE.

SLOGAN 4: LIVE AND LET LIVE.

PROMISE 4: NO MATTER HOW FAR DOWN THE SCALE WE HAVE GONE, WE SEE HOW OUR EXPERIENCE CAN BENEFIT OTHERS.

JUST FOR TODAY 4: I WILL TAKE CARE OF MY PHYSICAL HEALTH; I WILL EXERCISE MY MIND; I WILL READ SOMETHING SPIRITUAL.

HELPFUL CONCEPT 4: WE DO NOT JUDGE; WE DO NOT CRITICIZE; WE DO NOT ARGUE. WE DO NOT GIVE ADVICE REGARDING PERSONAL OR FAMILY AFFAIRS.

TODAY BOOK—APRIL 10

REFLECTION FOR TODAY

Secrets create a wall, which keeps us lonely and isolated. They can also keep us from experiencing love. The more secrets I carried, the more shame I felt. The more shame I experienced, the more I wanted to close myself off from others. No longer do I have to alienate myself from others. There are people who are waiting and willing to listen to my secrets. They will not shame me. Instead they will understand because they have dealt with their own shame. By sharing my secrets I gain acceptance, belonging, and trust in my value as a person.

MEDITATION FOR TODAY

May I have the courage to share the secrets I have tried to keep buried in my subconscious, for I realize this will set me free.

TODAY I WILL REMEMBER

By sharing my shame, I can join the human race.

www.EmotionsAnonymous.org

Box 4245—St Paul, MN 55104

Phone 651-647-9712

Hours Mon—Thurs: 10 to 3:30 CST

director@emotionsanonymous.org

editor@emotionsanonymous.org

groupdata@emotionsanonymous.org

orders@emotionsanonymous.org

shipping@emotionsanonymous.org

FROM YOUR EA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

It is with very heavy hearts that we share the sad news that Gus Schloesser, the President of the EA Board of Trustees, passed away on March 2, 2019. Gus was an enormous asset to this organization and a kind friend to all. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

SPECIALS GIFTS AND MEMORIALS



In memory of Gus S, President EA Board of Trustees
Elaine N, St Paul, MN and Sandy W, Little Canada, MN

In memory of Leroy P, Former Trustee - Anita H, Cottonwood, AZ

In memory of Dan H, Contact Person - Anonymous, Bethel, CT





STEP 4: MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.

I have spent time writing and thinking about my life. I have not officially told my HP, nor have I told another person. I have not stopped working my program, but I just seemed to skip over the action of sharing this information with another person.

I want to go back now and complete this step. I see that my problem seems to be that I trust no one to hear these things and actually care what my life has been. Then I think that my problems are ordinary human struggles and not important enough to be told in detail to another person. As you can see, there is confusion here. This will be a good spot to focus on. I want to move forward in recovery and build a strong foundation from which to work. I know from listening to other members that sometimes that means taking a step back...*Kathy*

I am so very glad that I have gone through the steps of EA and in doing so have rid myself of much EMOTIONAL GARBAGE.

It was quite an eye-opener sharing my 4th step with my sponsor Pamela and learning how hard and judgmental I'd been on myself! I treat myself much more kindly now and it makes a difference.

Technology has made information on just about everything easily available. Sometimes it seems like TOO MUCH INFORMATION.

I continue getting rid of clutter. I function better in an environment with open space provided with furniture and things that have designs that I like. I do pray for other EAnon members and hope that everyone

finds joy and and meaning in their lives...*Carol*

For about a month I was feeling peculiar. That's a good word. I didn't know what was the matter. It wasn't depression exactly. I wasn't miserable. Nothing physical was bothering me any more than usual. But somehow there was this "feeling." Something was wrong but what? It was blah, bland and icky!

Then the lights came on. Several folks on EAnon talked about Step 4. Aha! Why does it take me so long to figure it out? I've done Step 4 many times and I know how helpful it is.

So I sat down and wrote and wrote some more. My pen just wouldn't stop. And, as I wrote, clarity came into my life once again.

It so happened I was due to go on a retreat the next weekend, so I took my 4th Step with me and did my 5th Step with one of the priests there. Wow! What a difference in my "feeling."

My "peculiar" has left and I'm once again back to me. There's nothing like the 4th & 5th Step to restore serenity...*Mary Jane*

JUST FOR TODAY 4: I WILL TAKE CARE OF MY PHYSICAL HEALTH; I WILL EXERCISE MY MIND; I WILL READ SOMETHING SPIRITUAL.

This is one of my favorites. For me being a brain-oriented person, I might have the tendency to over-exercise my mind, and to read things spiritual. For me, the first part of this guideline has proven most important: "Just for today I will take care of my physical health."

There is a lot to taking care of my physical health: steady blood sugar, whole and low glycemic index foods, good rest, meditation, dream-filled

sleep, and exercise. Every one of these affects my mood. Exercise has helped the most. It helps create feel good hormones, it channels anxiety (and anger), it steadies my focus, it helps to regulate my appetite and ensure better sleep.

The teacher showed us both a new exercise that did not come easy to me. I had to learn to use both sides of my body, in kind of a swirling motion, on the floor. What I learned from the exercise is that our muscles store memory and it can be helpful to "unwind" all the micro-fibers that are involved in old patterns, often related to old injuries.

I really noticed how much my right arm and shoulder liked the unwinding rather than me constantly trying to retrain and improve that dominant side of my body.

That kind of unwinding is a form of joy I hope to add to my exercise toolkit, one day at a time. Yes, it had me turning from one feeling to another, left side to another, and experiencing a sense of freedom, just as if I had wings!...*Victoria*

SLOGAN 4: LIVE AND LET LIVE.

Thanks for bringing attention to this slogan today, as it is exactly what I need. Again, it is HP's hands to have this one come up today. Truly if we look we will see the evidence of HP working in our lives.

For me, live and let live means pay attention to living your own life and focus on yourself, as you are the only person you can change. The let live means let the other person live their life, learn their way, discover in their own way...*Sophie*





DISCOVERING THE TOOLS OF EA



SHARING MY RECOVERY

PROMISE 4: NO MATTER HOW FAR DOWN THE SCALE WE HAVE GONE, WE SEE HOW OUR EXPERIENCE CAN BENEFIT OTHERS.

I like Promise 4 very much, so I will share about my progress in the hope it can benefit others. My brother was only 18 and killed in a gang fight when he was at the wrong place at the wrong time. I was only age 20 at that time, and my whole family turned to drinking and drugs. I was just getting clean and sober and I found that I didn't want to be "crazy" during my sobriety. I was so grateful to find EA to help me live with more sanity, than insanity. I worked the steps with my sponsor and it really helped me.

I got away from the program and wound up in an alcoholic/abusive marriage. I left that when the kids were young. I returned to EA and was happy to find this program again. It gave me hope that I could still be okay emotionally by following this program, even though it was stressful as a single parent mom, I made it through okay with the help of others in this program and other 12 Step groups I attend. I did the EA Steps again with another sponsor and discovered lots of things to help me, the Just for Today's, the Slogans, re-reading the steps when stressed, reading stories in the EA book, reading the Loop shares, EA's online discussion group, and going to meetings in my town and online. Our EA meeting in our town lasted a few years, but wound up closing due to lack of attendance, so I am grateful that I had started an online EA meeting at eachat.webs.com and am grateful I can attend those meetings weekly with other 12 Step groups I attend.

The main thing that I found in EA was a loving Higher Power who I am willing to turn to daily to help me with my life, especially my defects of character which have lessened since I have been in the program. I am so grateful for my Higher Power belief. I am strengthened and comforted when I need it and my Higher Power is only a prayer away. Even if all I say to the Higher Power is "Help" in the morning and "Thank you" at night, I am at least trying to connect daily with that Power greater than me. I know I am being helped with my life.

When I was 18, 19, and 20, I wound up in mental wards due to me just being very unwell emotionally. I just couldn't handle my emotions or my life. I would never ask for help from anyone. I stuffed all my feelings down, I overworked myself, and was a real wreck. I had been turning to alcohol, drugs and abusive people and co-dependency. I just was a very unhappy person. I got help for myself, because I was finally tired of being sick and tired and haven't wound up in those places since. I have had to be honest with others and really know I do not have to do life all alone. There are others in the program who I can talk with and share recovery with. I also seek outside help from a psychologist as a part of my emotional well-being.

My life is not all gold and diamonds. In fact, I am very low income, but I have riches of love, peace and serenity when I daily connect with my Higher Power and others on this 12 step journey. For that I am very grateful! I know with this program that I have more of a chance at a good life, than without it. Any credit for me being well emotionally always goes to that Power greater than me and my emotional illness!...**Connie**

DISCIPLINE

I am glad that I realize that I am powerless over my emotions and that I am responsible for the actions I choose. Our Program says, "... In order to be free, we must be disciplined." In the days before recovery, I did not know what freedom was. I lived in the pain of my youth and allowed many of my decisions to be influenced by how I felt. If my feelings were hurt, then I hurt others. I was very selfish and always wanted what I did not have, and when I got it, it did not matter to me anymore. It was no wonder that depression was my drug of choice, and that I would use alcohol and sex as ways to act out and attack others.

What I have learned about discipline being freedom for me is that today I do not have to act out against others. I have come to understand that forgiving others is not for them but for me. It sets me free from my past. Resentment means to feel again. I allowed the resentments of yesterday to live in my world today. I have set them free. Love is in letting go. That makes so much sense to me today...**Paul**



2018 – 2019 EA Board of Trustees

Please feel free to contact members of the Board with questions or concerns



SCOTT J, MN 507-276-0323 sdjakel@gmail.com Vice President/Treasurer

JOHN W, MN 612-760-0313 johnwerner52@gmail.com Secretary

COLLEEN C, MN 651-245-5461 coyne2003@hotmail.com

DERITA P, OH 216-624-3559 deritapippen@gmail.com



THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

The 12 Traditions are the guidelines by which our group and our fellowship function.

They have proven over the years to be an effective way of holding the fellowship and individual groups together.

TRADITION 4: EACH GROUP SHOULD BE AUTONOMOUS EXCEPT IN MATTERS AFFECTING OTHER GROUPS OR EA AS A WHOLE.

Autonomy means freedom from external control or influence; independence. In this context it means that each group can make its own decisions, provided what they decide doesn't affect other groups or EA as a whole. Each group plans when and where they'll meet. They choose their own formats, not necessarily using the EA suggested format. Each group determines which EA literature they'll use during their meeting or whether they'd opt to have EA speakers come to share their experience, strength, and hope. Your homegroup determines how much money it will send to EA International to help carry the message to the person who still suffers from emotional problems. None of these preferences would affect other groups or EA as a whole...*Derita P*

Having autonomy brings freedom to choose. Knowing that each EA group can make choices for how things operate in that group allows for differences and diversity. The boundary of Tradition 4 comes into play when one EA's group's decisions affect all of EA. An example: if a group wants to pray the Lord's Prayer or read Bible verses, one might think that Tradition 4 grants autonomy. But does it? Perhaps having too much religious language in such a prayer and sharing Bible verses affects EA as a whole—in terms of violating a basic EA principle: to be spiritual and not religious. Autonomy has limits...*Scott J*

Excerpts from EA's 12 By 12 regarding Tradition 4

Each group should be autonomous...," but what does that mean? According to the dictionary, *autonomous* means independent or self-governing. Therefore, every EA group is allowed to govern itself and to handle its own affairs. A group is free to make its own decisions and to solve its own problems. It is free to run the meetings as it wishes, to decide how to spend the money collected, and how to relate to other EA groups in the area. Each group is free to make its own mistakes and, hopefully, to learn from them. This makes every group totally responsible for its own successes and failures.

But, wouldn't it be better to have some authority, some governing body, establish rules to assure that all EA groups were the same? Isn't it a dangerous precedent to let each group do what it wants? We will certainly have rebels who will not follow the norm. Shouldn't intergroups have authority over groups in their area to tell them what they can and cannot do?

The answer to all of these questions is a definite *no!* Many people rebel against being told what to do, and they would not stay at a meeting long enough to experience any recovery should they find that meeting dictatorial. Others, being told what to do provides an excuse for them not to think for themselves. It gives them a way to place blame for a group's problems on others, possibly avoiding their own responsibility. People can also become resentful of those making the rules, and this can also hinder recovery....

The purpose of intergroups, the Board of Trustees, and the International Service Center is service—to assist groups and individuals in emotional recovery by providing information and support concerning the EA program. Their purpose is not to control or regulate EA groups. However, EA groups, intergroups, the Board of Trustees and the International Service Center do have a responsibility to point out when groups are negatively affecting other groups or EA as a whole.

In EA the individual is given the Twelve Steps as a way to emotional recovery, but it is up to each member to decide how to best apply these steps to his or her life. Similarly, each group is given the Twelve Traditions as a guide for success. It is up to each group to decide how best to apply these traditions to its individual situation...*EA's 12 By 12, pages 28 & 29*