



# THE EA CONNECTION: MARCH 2020

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## EA TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

**Step 3:** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.

**Tradition 3:** The only requirement for EA membership is a desire to become well emotionally.

**Slogan 3:** One day at a time.

**Promise 3:** We comprehend the word serenity, and we know peace of mind.

**Just for Today 3:** I will try to adjust myself to what is and not force everything to adjust to my own desires. I will accept my family, my friends, my business, my circumstances as they come.

**Concept 3:** We respect anonymity—no questions asked. We aim for an atmosphere of love and acceptance. We do not care who you are or what you have done. You are welcome.

## FROM YOUR EA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Protecting the Program

My EA 12-step program is a part of me that I protect, much like I protect my social security number or date of birth. I can't let my problems or other priorities get in the way of my daily reading and reflection, or my weekly meetings, or counting my blessings and saying the Serenity Prayer morning and evening.

It's also something that I have to continually nurture. I've found that the most critical times to nurture the program within me is when I am going through stress or crisis. It is then that I'm tempted to throw up my hands, skip my good habits and revert to my old ways of coping. Although these old coping skills may have served me in the distant past, I find they no longer contribute to my serenity or emotional health.

A friend recently shared a method she'd heard about for battling the chronic "stinking thinking" that begins to creep in when I'm not working and protecting my program. She told me to ask myself four questions of my negative thoughts: Are they true? Do I know them to be factually true or do they just feel true? How do I feel when I have these thoughts? And how would I feel if I didn't have these thoughts?

These questions remind me that while I'm powerless over the occurrence of my thoughts and emotions, I'm not powerless over the decision about what to do with them. Sometimes it's best to acknowledge and let go of my emotions. At other times, I might have to take action. This is when the Serenity Prayer becomes my saving grace. I need to accept what I can't change, have the courage to act when necessary and – most importantly – gain the wisdom to decide between the two. When I'm protecting my program, I can often act with wisdom. When I'm not, I run the risk of an unwise choice...*Colleen C, Trustee*

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## RECOVERY USING THE TOOLS OF EA



### **Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**

**Honesty is critical** for recovery. Getting in touch with my emotions was something that would not happen until I made the 3rd Step decision. Oh, I was aware of certain emotions, and they were mostly negative. Passive aggressive tendencies helped me perform "good deeds" with hidden resentment.

I am no actress. You will not find an Emmy award or an Oscar award for me. So, no matter how hard I tried to cover up my real emotions, it was an epic fail. My words were hallowed, with little to no emotions to back them up. I was a fake. Everyone else knew it long before I would find recovery and humbly admit the horrible shame I felt.

It takes a connection with a God of my understanding to move through recovery. There was no way on this earth I would ever peel that layer away to reveal the ugliest, nastiest things that kept me chained to hell on earth. No way! I held onto to those deepest darkest secrets because I was certain no one would ever be able to love someone like me. Someone with such shame...

I came to the rooms of recovery where, unbeknownst to me, there were a lot of people who had stories much worse than mine. What a relief! I am not the only one. The strength of the fellowship, the network of friends and family within recovery helped me form a solid foundation to take each step. It was not easy, but it was easier than staying where I was at. Each day I awake with renewed zest and vigor for life. Thanks to God and recovery, I have a life worth living. Whatever

barriers kept me from being honest, God was able to remove and more importantly, heal those gaping wounds...*Lynn*

**I took Step 3** gladly. It was NOT an intellectual decision. My life works so much better having a source much bigger than I am to help guide me on my life journey. I am grateful to EA for providing a plan that has worked for me...*Carol*

**I've listened at** a lot of different meetings, and done a lot of reading, about "letting go." I have done my best to "make a decision" to put myself into my higher power's hands, many times. But the most profound experience I ever had as far as letting go is concerned, was with dealing with my alcoholic son. I had been told to kick him out, which is something I didn't take lightly. The time came when I was really able to see that I was powerless over him and his drinking. I was in despair, and I hit an emotional bottom. At that point I knew that only a higher power could help him, and I also saw that only a higher power could help me. I loved my son more than anybody or anything on this earth, and I was devastated about his behavior, and felt like a true failure as a parent and a human being. Once I hit a bottom myself, I was able to see that I was allowing his behavior and I needed to set some limits. I felt a release of sorts from the terrible pain, and a little bit of peace started to creep in.

It's incredibly difficult for me to keep my claws out of this young man! I do everything I can to let him live his own life. My doing that seems to have contributed to his finally deciding to sober up and live a good life for himself, and I spend most of my days in gratitude about that. I know it's one day at a time, and it's

humbling to see that my best efforts did no good whatsoever...*Gail*

**For years I** had mostly anxiety, but for the past several months I've had mostly peace. I've struggled with depression, and there's been a lot of improvement there. I've been taking anti-depressant medications. I've struggled with anger and there's been a lot of improvement there.

I've been doing the 12 Steps of Emotions Anonymous. I'm now working Step 3. For me, I said out loud something like "Higher Power, I commit my will and my life to your care."...*Kevin*

### **Slogan 3: One day at a time**

**I am grateful** to this program because it has made me realize how precious NOW is and how much I used to live in the past and future. I still struggle with this and sometimes wonder - what am I to "do" with my life...am I achieving "enough"? When WILL I achieve "enough"? Then I start thinking about the future and I like to call my thoughts "false dreams"...not because I don't achieve what I want to do but because when I include other people in my "future dreams" - they are indeed "false" dreams because it causes me to encroach on their paths...and to not stay on mine. I can only plan my life, and even then - sometimes it works, sometimes it does not. It has taken so much strength for me to accept that planning for other people creates false hopes and dreams and is actually quite selfish on my part - just as I do not like it when people plan my life, others do not like it when I try to plan theirs...*Kelly*





## DISCOVERING THE TOOLS OF EA: ANXIETY



### REFLECTION FOR TODAY

There were many times before the program when I did not know what to do next, so I tried to do everything at once. I ended up filled with anxiety and accomplished nothing except to make an already upsetting situation worse. Am I looking at priorities today, sorting them out, handling only the things I can, and leaving the rest to God?

### MEDITATION FOR TODAY

I ask for Your help to do all I can reasonably do today. Help me to stop, relax, wait, have patience, and be aware that during times of trouble You will continue to care for me, as You did when things were going well.

### TODAY I WILL REMEMBER

I will do the best I can, no matter what comes, and leave the rest to God.

### *I Had Dreadful Anxiety Attacks*

I used to have dreadful anxiety attacks, and now I feel guilty because I have children who have them. Both my children get them. I know it comes from feeling out of control and NOT having FAITH. They get them when they are angry like I did and feel things are not just. I am grateful to my youngest child's counselor because she brought me in this week to work with them. She had us read an article together and review a worksheet my daughter did and discuss when she has gotten the attacks. I added some information and we had such an open honest discussion. It was difficult for my daughter and she joked around at times but I was so proud of her. I learned a lot about her, and me and our little family and more about strategies for panic attacks. I looked at the whole experience in retrospect so positively because if it was not for EA, I would never be so trusting and allow an outside professional to speak with my children and trust them and have the faith that things really do get better. Even though my daughters' lives have had challenges since the divorce I know that they see that having faith is what has gotten us through and I see how EA has impacted our whole household's life. We all have become more trusting and patient and have much more faith and hope. My panic attacks have for the most part gone away. I was angry that they came back this year but my doctor pointed out that it was because I was not "accepting" that my ex-husband and his "nonsense" (her word) will always be in my life. That many people do this after divorce, that they think it will be over, and that as soon as I "accept" that he will ALWAYS be around and he will not change, I will feel MUCH BETTER. I have felt much better since I thought a lot about that and have worked on accepted this and asking God to help me with this. **Kelly**

### *Back Sliding*

I'm realizing that my thinking has gone negative. The social anxiety thoughts are dominating my thinking. I'm praying and giving it to HP. I'm reaching out to my sponsor, recovery friends, and doing CBT to help. **KW**

### *Gratitude*

I have written about my extreme anxiety, and some of you have responded with personal emails encouraging me, for which I am very grateful. Today's RFT is "We often take on the problems of the world. We let our feelings of despair overpower us." It goes on about so much despair in the world situations and allowing people and situations to instill in us fear, anger, defeat, and hopelessness. "I can choose who and what I listen to."

Today I choose to listen to you, my dear friends, who share from your heart honest, true feelings of where you are at in your daily life, the hurts and pain as well as the encouragement and hope you share. Today I choose to listen to my inner voice telling me that this anxiety does not define me. I proved to myself over the weekend that I can get out and do things in spite of those feelings and I didn't die.

Today I choose to be ever so grateful for all of you, for my wonderful doctor, for my job, for my car that keeps on running, for my mother who is only a phone call away, for my nephew who is now honorably discharged from the Marines and out of danger, for the gentle breeze today, and especially grateful to my HP who never fails me even if I feel I fail Him.

My days are minute by minute sometimes, but I am grateful to be here and alive and doing what I need to do to keep on going. Sometimes I slide backwards but for today I am grateful for those minute by minute challenges. **Pat**

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## The Twelve Promises—EA Book pages 70-71

These Promises may seem idealistic, exaggerated, or extravagant at first, but they really are possible. As we thoroughly and honestly work the program through Step 9, we start to notice new attitudes and feelings in ourselves. Some of these promises may be realized quickly, others slowly, but they all develop naturally as a result of honestly working the EA Program.

### Promise 3: We comprehend the word serenity, and we know peace of mind.

I never felt serenity and I couldn't grasp what the word meant. I would hear people talk about peace and having peace of mind, but that too was a foreign concept to me. The Fellowship of Emotions Anonymous showed me what the two words were and exhibited them in their actions. People with peace of mind don't find a need to argue, hold grudges, or judge other people. They are ok with themselves and therefore can accept other people. I know that I have peace and serenity when things that used to upset me don't even faze me. To keep this state I have to work the steps (well, live the steps) and rely on my Higher Power. **Derita P, Trustee**

When I was a child, my father used to tell me '*money can buy you a lot of things in this world, but it can't buy peace of mind*'. I didn't appreciate what he said when I was a child but came to appreciate it the older I got and the greater number of challenging situations I faced. Being in a state of regular panic, anxiety, guilt, shame and other negative emotions can come to feel normal, but I've learned that this wasn't living, certainly not the way God wanted me to. Through the program, I now know serenity and peace of mind. **Paul N.**

For many of us in the program, having peace in our mind seems to be out of the question – a complete fantasy. So many of us struggle with anxiety. We have not known – experienced for extended periods of time – moments of peace in our mind. Nonetheless, our program teaches us to be hopeful and active – working our program. We strive towards having more peaceful moments as we celebrate the presence of a power greater than ourselves actively calming us down and helping us to relax. We meditate. We center ourselves, serenely, because we know that that is the intention of being human. Being at peace. **Scott J., Trustee**

Hospitalized for depression, I desperately committed to Step 11's daily practice of prayer and meditation as an intentional and essential First Things First. I was committed, not as a conscious contact with my Higher Power in those early days, but purely to get my mind to stop screaming at me - for the peace of mind. It took daily perseverance for me to slowly realize there was a compassionate presence during my daily Step 11. Peace of mind, serenity, transformed into a healing sense of presence. **Sharon H, Member**

## Reflection for Today—Today Book, November 8

When things which usually upset me don't get to me, I know I have a hold on serenity. I just need to learn how to stay serene longer, more often, and through worse situations. Usually it helps to say to myself, "How important is it?" It also helps to be realistic about the situation, what is fair to expect, and what I can change. I also need to consider that I am the one who is hurt when I get upset. Sometimes it seems to help when I get upset, but only at my expense.