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Strength & Hope

A message in support of emotional well-being.

WELCOME EVERYONE, TO 2021! — KELSEY W.

The past year and start of the new year has pushed us to make many adjustments, sacrifices and additions to our way of life. This year is a milestone in the history of EAI; it is our 50th anniversary year! As the year continues, watch for new initiatives and efforts - such as the 50th Anniversary page in the Strength & Hope newsletter last month.

I have met people with 50 years or more in recovery. This is quite the feat! Can you imagine being part of EAI when it was established in 1971, continuing to participate throughout these past 50 years, and see all the positive things that are happening today? Wow! 2021 is also a big year for me and my family; this year my mom will turn 50 (like EAI) and I will turn 30 and celebrate 4 years in recovery.

I consider myself a newcomer to the program. As such, I try to direct my energy to do what is suggested by those who have more experience in the program than I do. Although this can be difficult, I have found when I look for the similarities and identify how I relate to what I hear, I find it easier to be open-minded about what is coming my way. The simple, unique 'Tools for Recovery' found in the back of the EA Big Book and in the Yellow Pamphlet are simple, useful ways to direct my thoughts. The tools suggested to work this program are illustrated for us in Helpful Concept 1, "We come to EA to learn how to live a new way of life through the twelve-step program of Emotions Anonymous which consists of Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, concepts, the Serenity Prayer, slogans, Just for Today's, EA literature, weekly meetings, telephone and personal contacts, and living the program one day at a time. We do not come for another person — we come to help ourselves and to share our experiences, strength, and hope with others." Coming to EA to help ourselves allows us the freedom to begin to help others. I have found that by sacrificing my old way of life to learn to live this new way is the greatest addition I have added to my life so far!

EAI is celebrating 50 years in 2021 because people have seen the value of this program for emotional health. Without members engaging with the program - by starting new groups, offering reflections for publication, or contributing financially - we would not be here today. I encourage you to say 'yes' to the invitations to get more deeply involved in EAI this year so that we are able to celebrate another 50 years in the future.

QUICK TIP OF THE MONTH

Doing something for others—even when we don't feel like doing it—can make us feel better in the end. Choose one way to be of service this month—do something that helps someone else.

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FEBRUARY'S TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

STEP 2

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

PROMISE 2

We do not regret the past or wish to shut the door on it.

JUST FOR TODAY 2

I will try to be happy, realizing my happiness does not depend on what others do or say or what happens around me. Happiness is a result of being at peace with myself.

SLOGAN 2

You are not alone.

HELPFUL CONCEPT 2

We are experts only on our own stories, how we try to live the program, how the program works for us, and what EA has done for us. No one speaks for Emotions Anonymous as a whole.

TRADITION 2

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

PERCEPTION IS REALITY - Kelly M.

I remember when I first started in EA, I felt an immense sense of loneliness and emptiness. It was a feeling which I could barely relieve, even temporarily.

When I started doing the steps, I knew EA was for me, as everything I was reading seemed to be written just for me. I felt comfort in knowing the way I felt was shared by so many others. This made me feel less alone than I had ever felt before. I no longer felt crazy or different.

I also learned that *my perception is my reality*. So what I was perceiving all the time was how I felt and processed things. EA helped me to change my reality. I did

this slowly by making choices about how I spend my time and my life. My old life was spent being co-dependent - doing things for other people in the hope that they might throw me some scraps. My new EA life is spent spending a lot of the time I would have spent on others on me instead - and on my plants, animals, and in volunteer service to others. The things I now do for family and friends, I do because I want to, not because of guilt or shame.

My program has changed my reality and by doing so, I rarely feel alone and I cannot remember the last time I felt that horrid emptiness. I am so very grateful to EA.

CAN YOU HELP?

We have designated funds for scholarships to help defray the costs of starting a new group, to send materials to prisoners, and to fulfill requests by individuals in need of but unable to afford to purchase literature themselves. All three of these funds were empty at the end of 2020. Several generous individuals made contributions totaling \$352 in January and we are very grateful to each of them! We have already been able to send a book out to someone who couldn't buy it herself. Could you make a contribution to any of these funds so we may continue to provide for those who are in need? You can make your gift online at www.emotionsanonymous.org/donate today. Thank you.

You can find the Trustee Reflections on the website,
www.emotionsanonymous.org.

This month we focus on Step 2.

CONTRIBUTION GRATITUDE

EAI could not operate without donations and we deeply appreciate your support! Recent gifts have been received from these groups:

Burlington, IA

Midwest City, OK

Hackensack, NJ Tues

8 PM, ET Zoom

Germany Intergroup (EA-Selbshilfe)

Oshawa, ON Canada Groups

Lisbon, Portugal

(Caminhar em Esperança)

ADMINISTRATIVE NEWS

New materials for a new year! In January we were able to introduce two new pamphlets—Comfort Zone (#91) and Pushing Away our Feelings (#92). We also revised Love (#53) to include reflection questions, which all pamphlets will eventually include. In February we will have additional new and revised pamphlets to share! We set a goal of adding new pamphlets every month in 2021. We welcome ideas from members for topics as well as writings!

The EAI free publications are now available for e-readers! Just go to <https://payhip.com/EmotionsAnonymousISC> to access them.

Each year the staff gathers to celebrate the holidays by having lunch together—this year we decided to hold the staff lunch after the new year to try to avoid the ‘after holiday’ blues. It was fun to take time out to appreciate each other and the work everyone does on behalf of the membership.

THE MORE I WORK THE PROGRAM — Marilee B.

My serenity comes from knowing it is okay if it is not my will.

- June 8 Today Meditation

I am so grateful for this simple truth. I am absolutely powerless over my emotions. They come and go as they please. My job is to recognize what I'm feeling, name them, and then decide how to respond. My most frequent old willful way was to stuff bad feelings. I can still do that but I have an ever expanding toolkit to use, and an ever expanding Higher Power to turn to.

I am also a caretaker. I can overstep boundaries to care for others (which often is a way to control situations too). As a kid I had a child's nurse kit I used to drag around. My mom had to keep it stocked with fresh bandaids otherwise I would flip out. I'm still fairly good in minor emergencies!

I'm can be willful— I still don't immediately hand over everything I could. HP has to sit back and watch while I struggle with a problem thinking that I can do this on my own. But the greatest gift of program is that at any moment I can stop being stubborn and/or willful.

The more I work the program, the more tools I have and the more I choose to use them. Then stubborn, willful events happen less frequently and aren't as lengthy. Many things help: Practicing all the steps, meetings, meditation, journaling, affirmations, many things that the EA book "It Works If you Work It" talks about. It all helps.

Some emotions that used to trigger my stubborn willfulness are easy to respond to now. Some triggers have completely vanished—all due to the grace of God. I am more resourceful and responsible because of EA. I'm willing to *Let Go and Let God* most of the time.

Now as Step 2 suggests, it is the personal God of my understanding that allows this. The greatest gift I have is a trust in a Power greater than myself. A sense of a safety and order in the Universe, or in the spark that illuminates us all. My ever-expanding God is what I can hand things over to.

People, places and things do not have to perform *my way* for me to feel secure or safe. During the last few months some outside events have tested my faith and resourcefulness and disturbed my serenity and sanity. I've also had days of deep gratitude and peace. I've had days where my faith in humankind crumbles. But I have no control over any of that. So what better time to utilize program and absolutely surrender? To read my literature, examine my step work, deepen my practice. To open myself to the amazing healing my program offers me.

OFFICE INFORMATION

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Trustee Shares: What EA Means to Me (in 50 words or less)

The program challenges me every week to grow and be more aware of what I do and say. It provides the tools to help me manage my emotions instead of my emotions unknowingly managing me. Working the literature and attending meetings gives me confidence that I can take on challenges which used to stifle me. — Paul N.

I would never have been able to reach my goals in life without EA. The tools and fellowship of the program have allowed me to work with my Higher Power to maintain a level of emotional sobriety so I can be my best self. EA means everything to me. — Colleen C.

EA is a spiritual community of support, recovery, and healing. I find that the program material and the interactions in meetings and in sponsoring/partnership relationships provide the help I need to be my best self. I've been a part of EA for over a dozen years. I feel like I'm just beginning! — Scott J.

For me, EA is a safe home, where I meet people who are closer to me than my family and friends. I was born again and chose a new path for my life with the EA program. I realized the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of my life. As I work this program, I am thankful for the moment that God designed this program for me and people like me. — Behzad A.D.

EA has meant a better quality of life, a sense of self-worth and serenity that I didn't have before. Through the understanding, acceptance, and support of the fellowship I've learned that I am not alone. I've learned to change what I could and to accept what I could not - I'm still working on the wisdom to know the difference. EA works; I don't know of a better alternative. — Steve B.

Since joining EA, the most impactful thing is that I never have to be alone again as long as I live, unless I choose to be. I have this whole fellowship of people with whom I can share my real thoughts and feelings. I never had that before, except for maybe a few people throughout my life, but no one understood me as well as another member of EA. — Derita P.

To me, EA means hope. There is hope in knowing that each week, or every day now that meetings are more accessible, I have a place to go to hear a message of experience, strength and hope. EA is a safe place for me to express myself without judgement. — Kelsey W.