



ComLine

Adult Children of Alcoholics
Experience, Strength & Hope

Volume 26, Number 10

September 2010

ACA Tradition Nine

**ACA, as such, ought never be organized,
but we may create service boards or committees directly
responsible to those they serve.**

How is any organization expected to function without being organized or structured by rules? Who ever heard of a successful company without some organization? Don't we need some form of governing board keeping the meetings in order? Yet, here is our Ninth Tradition reminding us to NOT be organized. How is ACA supposed to function? ...With service grounded in love, ACA creates service boards and committees directly responsible to those they serve. The committees have bylaws and procedures but, as such, are not organized into a governing body. Service committees develop ACA literature, organize Hospitals and Institutions meetings, and sustain helplines for adult children seeking help. ACA members accepting the call of service work provide the energy we need to do the good work of ACA around the globe. ...We trust our trusted servants to do the right thing, whether they serve at the group, Intergroup, or WSO level. We trust them to fulfill the duties they were elected to do.

...This trust is grounded in our Identity Paper on Service. In ACA, we give service with an attitude of love that helps ourselves and those we serve. When there is service coming from love, governance or weighty organization is unnecessary.

Trust does not mean that we are in denial about what happens around us. It does not mean that we allow our trusted servants to avoid fulfilling their responsibilities. Instead, trust means we realize that ACA is different than our family of origin or outside organizations. Our families could not be trusted to keep their word or follow through on promises. ACA members can be trusted to keep their word or at least be given a chance to do so.

Excerpts from pages 533 and 536 of the ACA Fellowship Text

About ACA

Adult Children of Alcoholics is an anonymous Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition program of women and men who grew up in an environment of addictiveness (alcohol or other substances) or in otherwise dysfunctional homes. Our willingness and resiliency bring us together.

We share our experience, strength, and hope to validate our experience as well as give some hope to the new member. We take positive action in our lives today. By practicing the Twelve Steps, focusing on "The Solution", and accepting a loving Higher Power of our own understanding, we find freedom from the past and a way to improve our lives.

For more information, please visit:
www.adultchildren.org

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ComLine is published thirteen times per year by ACA's World Service Organization (WSO). ComLine is intended as a communication line from WSO to the fellowship of ACA around the world, and as a forum for the fellowship to share their experience, strength, and hope in recovery. The opinions expressed are those of the individual writing the article and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ACA fellowship or WSO.

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The Twelve Traditions of Adult Children of Alcoholics

“While the Twelve Steps address recovery for the individual, the Twelve Traditions promote group unity and stability. The Traditions guarantee that we will always have a meeting to attend and that the meeting will focus on recovery from the effects of family dysfunction.

The Traditions allow our groups and service structure to remain focused on the primary purpose of carrying the ACA message to the adult child who still suffers.”

From the ACA Fellowship Text, pg. 346

What is ACA WSO?

Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization, Inc. is an organization of volunteer members elected to serve in the capacity of corporate trustees according to the laws of the State of California, U.S.A.

WSO provides a sense of common purpose, stability, and continuity for meetings, Intergroups, and Regions. By serving as a central point of group communication, the WSO encourages unity and similarity among ACA meetings. ACA WSO coordinates meeting information worldwide. It is one place where ACA groups and the general public can find information, literature, and locations of meetings.

The mission, the singleness of purpose, of WSO is to carry the message of recovery to all who suffer from being raised in an alcoholic or other dysfunctional environment.

Contacting Your ACA WSO

Have questions regarding:

Local Meetings...

New Meetings...

ACA Events...

ACA Literature...

Fellowship Text and Workbook orders...

Hospitals and Institutions support...

ACA Outreach...

or Public Information?

Just go to www.adultchildren.org, and select “Contact WSO” from the options menu. Comments and requests submitted by this web form will then be routed to the appropriate ACA WSO committee or board member for response.

You can also write to us at:

ACA WSO, PO Box 3216, Torrance, CA, 90510, USA
(Please do not send Express Mail)

We look forward to hearing from you!

Each 2010 edition of the ComLine will feature one of the ACA Traditions:

January

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

February

Tradition Two- 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.

March

Tradition Three- 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.

April

Tradition Four- Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other Twelve Step programs.

May

Tradition Five- Each group has but one primary purpose— to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.

June

Tradition Six- An ACA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the ACA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

July

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

August

Tradition Eight- Adult Children of Alcoholics should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

September

Tradition Nine- ACA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

October

Tradition Ten- Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

November

Tradition Eleven- Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.

December

Tradition Twelve- Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Tradition Nine of ACA

Omer G.

When I first read Tradition Nine years ago, I thought it said that Adult Children of Alcoholics had no structure. The Tradition actually says “ACA, as such, ought never be organized.” But we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to the fellowship.

For the most part, the service committees that are formed are group-business committees or Intergroups. An Intergroup can have numerous subcommittees that oversee ACA business within a given geographical area. An ACA Intergroup helps organize ACA helplines, recovery celebrations, public awareness and hospitals and institutions meetings. There is also the ACA World Service Board of Trustees which serves the ACA fellowship and which maintains our international office for group services.

In my experience, Adult Children of Alcoholics has the right amount structure without being overly organized or mired in protocol. There is enough slack or space within the structure so that service duties are handled without recreating family stress or dysfunction. There are bylaws and Robert’s Rules of Order but there are no committees on membership requirements and there are no directives from Intergroups or WSO to the groups and vice versa.

Almost everything I have learned about appropriate structure and organization, which is quite different from oppressive control, I learned from ACA’s 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. That means that the ACA Steps and Traditions have a structure and sequence that is clear and recognizable but which also has space and breathing room.

Without me knowing it, the Steps and Traditions prepared me for service within the ACA service structure. The Steps helped me trust myself and others before I ever attended a service meeting. The Steps provided a simple structure which helped prepare me for service as well.

The Steps are numbered One through Twelve. The sequence of the Steps involves admitting powerlessness,

coming to believe, making a decision, taking personal inventory, and so on for the remainder of the Steps. The Twelve Traditions have a similar sequence beginning with unity, followed by ultimate authority (a loving Higher Power), the only requirement, autonomy and so forth.

By working the Steps and studying the Traditions, I was learning structure and sequence before I ever accepted a service position or considered how ACA was organized, as such. This was subtle, but the Steps and Traditions presented structure and direction which was different than my family of origin. When I worked the Steps with a sponsor, I did not “jump ahead” in the Steps or skip Steps. I accepted their structure and proceeded accordingly even though I did not totally trust the Steps or their possible results.

I worked the Steps to address my fear of authority figures, stuffed feelings, and a sense of being flawed. But I was also preparing myself to work within the flexible structure of ACA without being baffled by an apparent contradiction, i.e., a flexible structure with bylaws and committee rules. I trusted the structure because I trusted myself due to my Step work. I also trusted others, and I understood the meaning of Trusted Servant.

There is one other key element within the ACA structure which has its origins within the 12 Steps. That element is the spirituality of the program. Without spirituality, working the ACA Steps or giving service becomes merely homework and unnecessary organization. Without spirituality, trust, and emotional sobriety, our organization would invariably devolve into a bureaucratic mess with rigid rules and binding structure. Such recreation of family dysfunction would hinder our primary purpose which is to carry the message to the adult child who still suffers. Spirituality is represented by the term Trusted Servant. I trust others because I trust myself.

More Tradition Nine Insight...

(from the ACA Fellowship Text, pg. 532-533)

In my opinion, Tradition Nine is perfect for adult children, who ask for rules and structure, and then decry any rules that might be applied. Tradition Nine says there will be no organization, as such, but there will be service boards and committees with bylaws, motions, and voting rules. Tradition Nine says no one has power over another. But there are trusted servants elected to do the business of ACA. Tradition Nine and Tradition Four (group autonomy) say my group can do what it wants as long as it does not affect ACA as a whole. I know this all sounds contradictory, but it makes sense to me. I have learned to trust ACA and its lack of formal organization.

Tradition Nine keeps me and my ACA group from over-controlling the fellowship with a rule book or a policy manual. It would never work for us anyway. I guess the issue is trust. I need to remember that ACA is different than my family of origin. I don’t need to make people honor their words or actions with rigid organization. I need to trust them to keep their word. I need to keep mine as well.

Service Across the Sea – Memories of Denmark

George S.

At the end of August, I traveled to Denmark to attend a vibrant ACA Intergroup meeting, along with as many fellowship meetings as I could fit in during my visit. For 10 days, I traded my wheels for sneakers as I embarked on a green approach to getting around this beautiful area, meeting with ACA members I felt were family even though I had never before met them.

ACA is alive and well in Denmark! There are 50 active ACA meetings -- about 2-5 per day -- available to adult children with a desire to work on recovery. Their Intergroup model is strong, and I hope we can replicate their model here in the southeast United States where my own home Intergroup is located.

The Danish Intergroup meeting I attended was held at St. Paul's Church, Gernersgade 33, 1319 Copenhagen K. They had a detailed agenda for the meeting, and the program covered business and financial matters. They discussed issues familiar to all Intergroups – for example, coordinating meetings, reducing costs, maintaining an appropriate stock of books, disseminating news from individual groups, managing literature sales, etc.

Tradition Nine states that ACA as such ought never be organized, but may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. The Danish Intergroup is keenly focused on service, and service representatives are able to stay in constant contact. Not only do they work together at the scheduled Intergroup

meetings, but they also remain in contact through a private online discussion group focused specifically on service-related issues.

Visiting another country is always stressful, but I felt at home thanks to the ACA fellowship. I am thankful to have had a host who was very instrumental in keeping us on schedule and making sure we got to the meetings on time. (In Denmark, I learned, on time is actually a half hour early!) Having been a sedentary person of late, it was a shock to my system to walk as much as we did, as well as to come out of my diminishing isolation to interact with others. Living in a spread out city like Atlanta, Georgia doesn't allow human contact as easily. In Denmark, we walked, went by train or bus, and occasionally by car. The feeling of community was wonderful.

There was a language barrier, but after a few meetings, I began to understand the Promises in Danish. Those ACA members in Denmark who read English and have the Red Book know the impact the new material will have on the program in Denmark when the translated version of our fellowship text is available.

Tradition Nine came alive to me in Denmark as I noted that although our Intergroups are separated by thousands of miles, and are not organized as such, we share a common goal for healing and an innate understanding of the importance of fellowship and service.

The ComLine Needs You

Would you like to share about one of the ACA Traditions? Are you willing to share your experience, strength, or hope in ACA recovery? Want to tell the fellowship about what's going on with ACA in your region? Just send us an article!

ComLine Guidelines

Articles may be submitted for publication by mailing them to ComLine, PO Box 3216, Torrance, CA 90510, or by submitting them electronically through the web form found at www.adultchildren.org. Articles which are not used will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Articles will be selected for publication at the discretion of the editorial staff. Articles which might violate the Twelve Steps or the Twelve Traditions of ACA will not be printed. Profanity, related euphemisms, personal attacks on others, and libelous statements will not be used. Authors will be listed with a first name and last initial only, even if it's a pseudonym.

ComLine Subscriptions

ComLine is mailed to subscribers and to 7th Tradition supporters of ACA WSO. For those subscribing to receive the ComLine via postal mail, we request a donation to offset our cost of printing and postage. Rates shown are in U.S. Dollars:

Inside the US:	\$16.00/ year
Canada:	\$19.25/ year (USD)
International:	\$24.00/ year (USD)

To subscribe, please send your mailing information and donation to: ACA WSO, PO Box 3216, Torrance, CA 90510. Subscriptions can also be processed online at: www.acawso.com/wsobook/literature.php

ComLine Archive

ComLine editions published since 2004 are available to read or download, and new issues are posted each month. Just go to www.adultchildren.org and select "ComLine" from the options menu.

How to Start an ACA Intergroup or Regional Service Committee (Guidance from the ACA Fellowship Text)

In areas where many ACA meetings exist, an Intergroup is generally formed to provide a forum for conducting ACA business within that given geographical area. Individual ACA groups continue to conduct their own group business; however, the groups also work collectively as a larger Intergroup. An Intergroup is composed of elected representatives from the various ACA groups in an area. The Intergroup helps coordinate helpline functions, public information efforts, hospitals and institutions meetings, and ACA events in their area. An ACA Regional Service Committee serves a similar function by helping coordinate ACA functions and fellowship business among several Intergroups in a specific geographical area.

There are currently 35 ACA Intergroups registered with ACA World Services. In addition to the many United States Intergroups, there are also organized Intergroups in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, Russia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. There is also a dedicated Intergroup of the ACA telephone meetings. Contact information for these registered Intergroups can be found on the ACA website (www.adultchildren.org). Just select “Intergroups” from the options menu on the home page.

If there is currently no active Intergroup in your area, consider starting one. The ACA fellowship text offers numerous tips for establishing an ACA Intergroup or Regional Service Committee. You may also want to contact ACA WSO for additional information on starting and registering a new Intergroup.

Here are a few suggestions:

Think about your reasons for starting a new service committee.

- Are you starting the Intergroup or Region to help yourself and others?
- Are you starting the committee to reach out to adult children and to support ACA’s growth and unity?

List the needs of your geographical area.

- Does your area need an ACA helpline or part-time special worker?
- Do you need to coordinate hospitals and institutions meetings?
- Are the activities within your area coordinated so that the events are announced in a timely manner?
- Is there interest in forming a public information committee?

Invite interested adult children to attend an organizational meeting.

- Decide the time, day, and place.
- Locate and arrange for a meeting space.
- Post flyers at ACA meetings and hand them out to members.
- If possible, invite members from an established Intergroup or Region to your first meeting.

Create an agenda for the first meeting.

- Get input from those who might attend the meeting.
- Decide the purpose and objectives of the organizational meeting.

Ask for help to run the meeting.

- Ask someone to chair the meeting.
- Select a temporary secretary to take minutes.

If appropriate, elect officers.

- Officers would include a chairperson, secretary, and general committee members.
- A treasurer might be elected if there are group funds or the potential of group funds to be donated.

Prioritize identified needs as urgent, important, low priority, or short-term solutions.

In the beginning, keep it simple.

- Most new Intergroups focus on establishing an area helpline, organizing area events, providing public information, or organizing volunteers for hospitals and institutions meetings.

Seventh Tradition Contributions– July 2010

“The fund flow model of ACA is based on a 60/40 disbursement. After a group meets its monthly expenses and sets aside money for a prudent reserve, 60 percent of what is left over is usually sent to the local Intergroup and 40 percent is sent to WSO.

A prudent reserve usually is the amount that equals one to two month’s worth of meeting expenses. Meeting expenses would include rent, utilities, and other group expenses.”

**Please note that Seventh Tradition contributions mailed to ACA WSO take approximately 3 months to appear in this ComLine report.*

CA755 - Pasadena, CA	44.00
CA825 - La Jolla, CA	30.00
CA989 - Mission Viejo, CA	100.00
CAN266 - North Vancouver, BC	75.00
DC010 - Washington, DC	50.00
IL130 - Libertyville, IL	100.00
MD024 - Columbia, MD	50.00
NY038 - New York, NY	200.00
TEL006	20.00
TEL008	15.00
TEL012	25.00
TX074 - San Juan, TX	10.00
WI076 - Madison, WI	25.00
Anonymous Donations	856.07
Total 7th Tradition	1,600.07

From the Treasurer:

Our outreach and support continues to grow. ACA WSO received just over \$1,600 in 7th Tradition Contributions in July. Our total income was over \$24,000 for the month. While expenses were also high this month, we still cleared a net gain of over \$2,000.

The California Sales Annual Tax was paid in July. Our accountant confirmed that we are obligated to include Los Angeles County tax for all sales in California (our sole office being in Los Angeles County). As a result, I’ve updated the Literature and Fellowship Text online order forms to reflect this additional sales tax for all California sales. (I plan to update the paper order forms as soon as possible.) As a 501c3 organization incorporated in California, ACA WSO also submitted its required Annual Registration form to the California attorney general in July.

I continue to serve as the payroll approving official for those employed at the WSO office. The new process is working well. All employees now submit their time sheets online where I can then view and approve them online as well. Phyllis and I visited the WSO Office in Signal Hill in July, working with the staff to clarify various details. We found the office well organized and working efficiently under the excellent direction of DiAnne A.

Getting Involved in ACA WSO Service

According to the Operating Procedures and Policies manual of the ACA WSO:

- Those ACA members willing to volunteer service as members of the Board of Trustees must present themselves to five Board Meetings within a seven-month period of time. The ABC meeting is considered a "regular" meeting for the purpose of extending board membership.
- Intergroup and Regional Representatives will be required to fulfill the same qualifications for board membership as elected Trustees.
- New board members should also be actively attending Adult Children of Alcoholics meetings and have a working knowledge of the ACA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
- The potential Trustee should have at least three years of ACA program work, which includes regular meeting attendance, Step work and changed behavior. Previous experience in a service position is desirable.
- Potential Trustees without direct ACA experience and/or without a working knowledge of the ACA Steps and Traditions may be asked to serve on an ACA WSO subcommittee for one year before being considered for board membership. This would allow the person to obtain Traditions and service knowledge before becoming a Trustee.

Interested?

The monthly teleconference of the ACA WSO Board of Trustees is held on the second Saturday of each month at 1:00pm Central time (11:00am Pacific time). Visitors may introduce themselves and then listen for the next hour and a half as the Board conducts business for the ACA Fellowship.

To participate, call **712-432-0075**, and when prompted, enter the access code **427266#**. It is also now possible to connect to the teleconference through Skype. Details about this option can be found on the ACA WSO forum.

ComLine

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