

Reflections on Promise 1

Promise 1: We realize a new freedom and happiness.

To realizea new freedom and happiness means that I become fully aware of new freedom and happiness in me. If I realize something has happened, then I clearly understand that this thing has occurred. The odd part of promise 1 coming true is that even though I realize that it is happening – this new freedom and happiness in my life – it happens without my understanding of exactly how it happens. Because so much of life is a mystery, I have a sense that that is how transformation through our program — through a higher power — is intended to occur... — Scott J., *EAI President*

These promisescome true after completing the ninth step. When I came into the program 24 years ago, I looked at the promises and said no way, I could never acquire most of them, and this was one. Happiness and freedom, and peace of mind were all foreign ideas to me. I had long since experienced laughter. In fact when I heard people laughing I thought something was wrong with them or that they were laughing at me. Today I have completed step nine and am living in steps 10, 11, and 12. I have to revisit steps 1, 2, and 3 from time to time. The steps are my ticket to the promises and there are many; a lot of hidden ones that are not talked about much like being able to sit and visit with some-one, be at peace and really give of myself. I could not do that in my emotional disease… — Derita P., *EAI Trustee*

Some of us in the EA fellowship treat the Twelve Promises as a separate and distinct list which exists alongside (sometimes on equal footing with) the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. I’ve even heard some speak of these as a kind of “guarantee” of emotional wellness that EA “promises” to its members. Both of these interpretations take the Twelve Promises out of context. These promises are set forth in Step 9, and the fulfillment of Promise 1’s “new freedom and happiness” entirely depends on how thoroughly and honestly we work the program – including taking responsibility for our actions and making amends by changing our behavior... — Steven B., *EAI Trustee*

Before entering the program, I thought freedom and happiness were privileges, unreasonable to be had on a sustaina-ble basis. As I have worked the steps and sat with my peers in fellowship, I have indeed realized freedom and happi-ness that I never thought were possible. In one of the meetings I attended, I asked around the room to see if there was anyone who regularly felt happy and many people raised their hands and they said I deserved that as well. My outlook on my ability to be happy has changed as a result of my belonging to EA. I am grateful to have this program... — Paul N., *EAI Treasurer*