



The EA Connection: June 2018



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EA TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

STEP 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

TRADITION 6: An EA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the EA name to any related facility or outside enterprise lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

CONCEPT 6: We never discuss religion, politics, national or international issues, or other belief systems or policies. EA has no opinion on outside issues.

PROMISE 6: We have less concern about self and gain interest in others.

SLOGAN 6: Look for the good.

JUST FOR TODAY 6: I will try to go out of my way to be kind to someone I meet. I will be considerate, talk low, and look as good as I can. I will not engage in unnecessary criticism or find fault, nor try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.

From the Director, ISC

In our ongoing effort to have more members participate in a variety of ways, we asked a member from Sweden for his views on the shift of the use of both "God" and "Higher Power" to just the latter in our literature. Here are Peter M.'s thoughts:

My relationship with my Higher Power has been a troubled one. Sweden is a pretty secular country; my childhood perhaps more so than others. No religion interfered with my parents belief in the *Gospel of the Brain*, the *Human Brain* reigned supreme. I became a rational atheist.

So, when at age 27, my life fell apart, I was lost in more sense than one. I had left my parents and the "tools" I had didn't work any longer.

At that time a friend introduced me to the 12-Step program and I felt hope! Being an atheist, of course the "G"-word was troublesome. But I also saw that it said: "God as we understood Him." That left me breathing space.

I looked at my new friends who did have a Faith, and I envied them. Believing in "God as we understood Him" they seemed to have an ease about them that I missed. Long story short: I encountered God in a quiet yet powerful way. It wasn't easy; my long history as a devout believer in the *Brain* made it, and still does sometimes, somewhat of a struggle. But I did make up my mind based on my own personal experiences.

Now, EA is about to change a word. *Higher Power* will be

used instead of *God* in the literature. My first reaction to the news was a knee-jerk dismissal: 'What are they doing?' Is this a desperate move to appease the Doubters? Or a sensible move aiming to remove a stumbling block for those who have yet to discover the program? Certainly, God cares not what we call Him/Her. Having spent some time thinking about this, I believe it's a wise change. The center of the program is a spiritual awakening to what it is to be a human being and how we relate to one another. That center is much bigger than a single word; we are talking about a word and not the Reality behind the word. Isn't there a risk that *Higher Power* is more diluted, or weak than *God*? Maybe. Isn't God a mighty crutch to lean on? Yes, it may be. But it is also an authority (the arch-typical authority) for people who all too often have been mistreated by authorities.

In Swedish we have two words that are being discussed. The first is *kraft* that is usually translated to *force*. The other is *makt*, usually translated as power. *Makt* (power) is *kraft* (force) with direction, with intent. Far too many have been abused by *makt* and many 12-steppers react negatively to that word. *Kraft*, on the other hand, doesn't have that association. It's just is, like a strong muscle or a skilled hand, and is usually not associated with misuse. The word God has, I fear, too many associations with bad use of power (religious wars, persecutions, etc.) The words Higher Power do not have that (at least not yet!) Therefore, I think it's a good move. The future will tell if that is so.

Peter M, Sweden



SPECIALS GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

In memory of Nichole A, dearly missed by EA friends and family
Wednesday and Saturday Virginia Beach Groups, VA





RECOVERY USING THE TOOLS OF EA



STEP 6: WERE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER.

Thinking about Step 6, the first thing that came to my mind was "it's a gift". I've never been able to will myself to be "entirely ready" to be changed by HP. I have seen a lot of character defects being removed from me and all of those removals happened as gifts and were out of my control, whether they happened over time or in a more dramatic, momentary fashion.

That said, looking back it seems I did have to become "ready" every time before that gift could be handed to me. In various ways. For example, my breakdown last summer after which I finally started trusting HP happened only after I had worked through a bunch of intellectual problems I had with the idea of faith. I had to become ready in that regard before my defects of mistrust and will to control could be taken away.

The point is: I had to get ready in order for my defects to be removed, and that process required effort on my part but at the same time it was utterly out of my control. All I could do was stumble along until I somehow emerged ready...*Tobias*

Step 6 helps me remain God conscience. For me it is a spiritual awakening step. I recall hearing at a step study meeting that the seed has been planted, and I can choose to follow the steps and traditions, but also have the freedom to choose not to. The seed has been planted also

means once I've sat in my first meeting I will never forget I have a place to go back to. Many seeds have been planted and may grow into such attributes as healthy thoughts, freedom of choice, and positive attitudes. I came to a place in my program where I risked handing over my life long painful memories to God, I had nothing to lose.

I made a choice to give God all my character defects. I knew I needed to be willing, honest and ready to learn and practice to grow in the program. I was so underdeveloped emotionally. There were some character defects I didn't want to let go of because I had nothing to replace them with. Little did I know I needed to use faith and hope in God, people, places and things. I needed to get out of self-centeredness. My world needed to expand. I gave my biggest defect over to God by practicing trust in the fellowship. There were times I didn't know what to do and I'd ask God for guidance. Once I did that I waited for a sign or anything to let me know I was doing the right thing. I did not hear a sign nor any indications from God, I was impatient and told God I'm going to try learning through trial and error. The co-founders did it. Why can't I? I took the bull by the horns and it was the answer to my question. I began learning to trust myself. With so many years watching and sharing with the fellowship, I am able to have friends who share their experience, strength and hope. I am no longer alone. Humility has taught me how to live freely and that I am responsible for my serenity and happiness...*Pat M*

SLOGAN 6: LOOK FOR THE GOOD

They say that "gratitude changes your attitude" and I do believe that to be true. There are so many things in my life to be grateful for and the more I stay aware of these things, the better my attitude is daily.

Today I will notice all the good there truly is in my life. When I do that, I know for sure that my Higher Power is not picking on me and in fact is putting wonderful things in front of me if I take the time to notice those things.

I actually can be very quick to notice the not so nice things, so if I just switch that to "looking for the good" instead, my attitude for the day will be much better. I want to work more on being really quick to notice the good things. I will ask my Higher Power daily for help with that.

Like if I am at a meeting and don't like something about the meeting, I can focus instead on the things that I "do like" about the meeting instead. Or with a person, if I am having a little conflict, I can focus instead on the good about that person, instead of the little conflict.

This does not come natural to me. It takes work, takes letting go of petty things and takes a Higher Power to direct me to all the good in people, places and things. So I am grateful to have a Higher Power to help me daily, but I just need to make sure I ask for daily help by turning over my will and life to that Power that makes my days go better. ..*Connie*





DISCOVERING THE TOOLS OF EA



MY ADDICTION

I am powerless over my emotions but not my reactions to them. I am addicted to drama and chaos! Being in the EA program for many years has given me a solid foundation on which to build a life of peace and success. It has taught me about acceptance, forgiveness and awareness. It's provided me with slogans which help fine tune each and every day when problems occur and I need to make choices it has helped me create the energy to make these choices in a healthier way.

The above is a very good setting on which to build a life. But I have a history and I have a past. I lived in depression for many, many years, I found comfort in the darkness of my depression. I created a lot of misery and pain for those around me. I was filled with ego, a self-will run riot and addictions which include sex, cigarettes and food. I endured myself in these addictions and hurt a lot of people in the process. I still want to have drama and chaos in my life and so it is here. These things drive me, I get a lot of negative crap when I am in these moods but the EA program has helped me to look for the good, and when I finally get to the other side of the negativity, I am able to find the good.

Today, I know that I am my problem. My mind and my feelings have shaped who I am today. I know that I am good man, willing to help and grow with others, but I am also a man who has not overcome his ego nor have I reined in my self-will which makes being in a healthy relationship very difficult. I have to live with who I am, still seeking the ability to lay down some of the negative things which drive my depression and to find the courage to lay these things down with the help of the EA program.

Before the program I was like most of us when I had a problem. I was always taking the inventory of someone else. Today I realize that since I am my problem, I have the ability to change the areas where my problems lie. Before EA I could not choose this healthier way—which provides me with a great deal of gratitude...**Paul H**

A BROKEN RECORD



I am grateful to this program and the twelve steps because to me they are much like a "broken record" that I have in my life that brings me comfort, peace and stability because it continues to say the same things over and over so that I can continue to heal and grow. I need this beautiful broken record in my life, this constant reminder, this guide, this consistency, this reliability, for this is what was missing before. These 12 steps remind me that I am never alone as I have a HP and He walks with me as do the others in my program...**Kelly**



ADDICTED TO NEGATIVITY

I was addicted to negativity. My thoughts tended to go in that direction rather than thinking of the positive. I thought about what could go wrong in any situation, rather than what might go right. Fear would consume me. I was afraid of failure. Hence, I did nothing for fear of making a mistake. I missed out on a lot of things in life. Due to working the 12 steps in my life today, negativity has been checked. It is still my natural tendency to go down that road, but today I have tools to use to keep from going down that road. I rely on my Higher Power to help guide me to a positive attitude about myself and my life. Reading EA literature reminds me I'm not alone in my thinking and I too can change if I choose to do so.

My husband always used to say that at AA meetings they would tell newcomers to "Go to meetings. Find God. And don't drink." I think in EA we can tell newcomers (and old-timers too) to "Go to meetings. Find God. And don't think." Thinking (always negative) was my biggest problem and I can't tell you how many times I was told, "You think too much." The program has taught me how to turn off my brain and stop analyzing, scrutinizing, homogenizing, pasteurizing things to death and to keep it simple by going to meetings, finding God, and not thinking so much...**Renee**



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THE 12 PRINCIPLES—STEP 6: WILLINGNESS

STEP 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

In the early 1950's Twelve Step groups began informally sharing what has become known as the Principles of the 12 Steps. Each step has a corresponding principle that one can keep in mind when working the steps. Below members share how Willingness factors into Step 6 for them.

For me, the principle of Willingness always travels with her two friends: Honesty and Openness. H.O.W. (Honesty, Openness, and Willingness) form the three-part foundation of “how” we move forward in our recovery work in E.A. I have an extremely strong will. Therefore, I must daily distinguish Willingness (with a component and “vibe” of humility) from Willfulness (“My way or the highway”). Ironically, the only “high” way that I can choose to move humbly forward in my search for serenity involves asking my Higher Power to help me trust in my H.P.’s guidance. The question for each moment: will I be willful or willing? **Scott J, Vice-president, EA Board of Trustees**

Step Six is about willingness. My old habits were so entrenched. I'm not sure that I would have been willing, if I hadn't reached a bottom. That bottom was a four day coma. Pretty intense. I sure hope others do not need such a low bottom! I advocate for the EA program because of my own experience and for my sister who never found the EA program...**Carol, EA member**

So, we've entered into, minimally, a 50/50 relationship with our Higher Power, which is certainly better than when we first began the work of Step 6. The more we work Step 6, the more we begin to realize that it's not always easy to change our habitual attitudes, our thoughts and our behaviors that cause unnecessary conflict with others, ourselves and perhaps even with our Higher Power. Yet, this 6th principle asks simply that we be willing to be open to learning new and even better ways of doing things, even letting ourselves learn from others. So, how do we know that we're willing? The simple and straight answer is by doing it!... **Gus S, President, EA board of Trustees**

EA Seeks Step Stories for New Workbook

A team of EA members are creating a new EA workbook that will be proposed to the EA Book and Literature committee later this year for publication. The guide is called “Welcoming the Spiritual Awakening Within Me.” It will include essays, stories, and questions to help guide members through the Steps and to welcome their own spiritual awakening.

The team is looking for EA members to submit Step stories for inclusion in the workbook. If you are interested in sending a story for consideration please contact Sharon for guidelines. Please note that not every story will be able to be included in the final version. Sharon's email is SharonHighb2@icloud.com, her phone is 785-633-7764. Submission deadline is June 30th.

Thanks Everyone!

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