

EA CONNECTION—MARCH 2016

YOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM ISC



The Happy Promise of Sponsoring

Want to Recover? Feel Good? Sponsorship Delivers!

I've been working 12 step programs for 38 years and I still *love* practicing sponsorship. In my longest running relationship we actually call ourselves co-sponsors, because we both take time to share our successes and struggles. In our weekly phone call we have a fun fellowship which is guided by our shared intention to move more deeply into recovery. My co-sponsor once told me that early that in his 40+ EA years he's seen very few people actually practice sponsorship. He believes that EA folks don't use sponsorship because we tend to be loners more so than members of other 12 step programs. A 2015 survey by EA International confirmed this theory when one of the top 3 membership requests was guidance on good sponsor relationships. The idea of sponsorship may initially be frightening; after all it asks us to be honest, vulnerable, and accountable in ways that most people will never experience. But it's worth it. My co-sponsor and I enjoy our relationship as one of the closest connections we've known on our life journeys. There is wisdom and peace which is best transmitted in face-to-face relationships with people who have done their work. I know that the connection and strength gotten only from sponsorship is vital and leads powerfully to the happy fulfillment of the promises! I invite you to start a conversation in your next EA meeting about how you can grow the practices of happy sponsoring!

Charlie B. is an EA member from the Apple Valley Minnesota group.



MARCH TOOLS:

STEP 3: MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS *WE UNDERSTOOD HIM*.

SLOGAN 3: ONE DAY AT A TIME.

TRADITION 3: THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR EA MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO BECOME WELL EMOTIONALLY.

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.

OF IMPORTANCE TO GROUPS:

The Board of Trustees is beginning to recruit new members for several positions. Would you be interested in serving EA as a whole? Watch for more information in April.

The 2016 EA International Convention will be held in sunny Arizona this year on September 23-25! Watch for more details in the coming months!

Today Book, March 12—Meditation for Today

May I remember there are people who love and cherish me, and it hurts them, as it hurts me, when I say negative things about myself.



MEMORIALS AND SPECIAL GIFTS:

In memory of Brian F, a valued friend and true purveyor of the EA way of life, Art H





STEP 3: MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM.

I thought that because I woke up everyday asking God to do His will in my life that it was enough. I never evaluated whether I was **allowing** His will in my life. Most recently I lost my job and realized that although I would surrender my will, I would take it back without even thinking. I even used "prayer" in part of my computer password log-in hoping to remind me to turn things over to God throughout the day. But I never stopped to pray, to ask God how I should handle a situation. I would get to work and then go on auto-pilot.

Losing my job was a shock to my core and put me in a depression, but it also reminded me that I have to surrender my will over to God and regularly check to see that I have not taken it back. I am still working on that...*Karen LV*

Lately at the top of my "to do" list, I write Step 3. I consciously turn my will and life over to my loving Higher Power before I even make my list. This helps me know my HP is in charge of me and my plans. When the day ends and I am seeing how much was accomplished, I know and trust my HP has been helping me with it all.

I will continue this daily practice as I feel comforted knowing my HP is truly with me in all that I am doing. I love the saying "surrender to win," because in turning over my will and life over to my HP, I really have been winning more at things that matter the most to me and I am very grateful for that. And even with difficult times, I am given strength, power

and comfort from a Power much greater than the difficulties. I am able to endure and live with unsolved problems with serenity given to me from my HP.

So, Step 3 will continue to be the first item on my daily list for my emotional well being, which not only benefits me, but others around me who don't have to endure my emotional "un-wellness" which was most times before EA. Grateful for recovery, one day at a time. Grateful to look for the good in this day before me. ...*Connie*

"The construction of my life will go as planned, just so long as I am willing to be crew and do not play the director." ML here, powerless over my emotions. I always have to remember the first thing in my day is to hand it over to my HP. And it's a one day at a time deal. Today is the only day I have to work with. It is so easy for me to get trapped into my thinking first thing in my day. To spend my time rationalizing, analyzing, and catastrophizing, in other words, to get into my head and then try to control everything in my day, my mood, my actions, basically shutting HP out with my yammering mind. I have to remember to ask HP to help me out. Something that works for me is to remember or say "thy will, not mine," and then hand it over and become the crew not the director which truly will make my day start to work again...*ML*

I keep going back to this Step, reminding myself that I must try **not** to play God anymore. All I am required to do is to live each day cheerfully and kindly. My HP will manage the rest...*Carol*

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.

I know that I often have had a difficult time with people. I expected perfection of myself and others. When I failed myself in any way, I would claim to myself that I was just a loser. This led to very low self-esteem. Then, when anyone else made a mistake, I considered them as being losers, too. But in EA, I learned that we all have assets as well as defects. I learned that lots of us can make mistakes, but it doesn't mean we are losers at all. I also have learned to have much more patience and tolerance for people, all due to my own emotional recovery and having patience and tolerance with myself.

I know that sometimes at my 12-step meetings there will be people who get on my nerves. But I know, they too, have a right to be there. I know that any of us seeking recovery has a right to be in those 12-step rooms. I learn to accept others as they are by going to meetings. It isn't always easy, but the more I go to meetings and hear more about living a spiritual life, the easier it is to accept people exactly as they are—and even myself exactly as I am for today.

...*Anonymous*





EA TOOLS APPLIED: GROWTH



ALLOWING GROWTH TO COME IN

I am suffering today, and simply unable to even put the details into words. I have done nothing shameful, but I am suffering from shame. I need to share from the heart. With as much self-compassion as I can muster.

I am going through a rough spot right now that is testing my belief in recovery, and in my own competence and faith. I have become jaded on almost every recovery tool I have ever used. But, instead of giving up, what if I see this time as a window of opportunity—to confront a false belief?

Hindsight shows I have been guilty of thinking I "should" always be honest, but protected, in my shares. This meant I was ever too ready to shoot from the hip if anyone ever "hurt" me or others. I thought this would prevent me from being a victim. From some very gentle and honest sharing I've witnessed on EAnon, I have learned that being hurt is sometimes an illusion. "Wearing my armor does not give me a good solid program, it gives me one that is restrictive, and will one day make me a victim of my own defenses."

What I see, instead, in many of your shares your strength lies in your vulnerability. Why was I so blind to that? I guess the time has come for me to open my eyes. Glad for compassionate readers, and for shared experiences. I have felt good and competent, and it was not all that long ago. There, I shall not edit any more, or the words will not mean what my heart needs to say...**Victoria** (EAnon is our online discussion group, for information go to [EAnon.](#))

PERFORMING VERSUS PARTICIPATING

I spent the weekend with part of my extended family. I hadn't spent that much time with them since I was a girl, and I was a little thrown by the whole thing, not sure what to say or do, etc. When I read the **Today** reading (July 28) this morning, I thought, "That's what I was doing, I was performing when I should have been participating." OK, now here's the part that let me know EA is working for me... My next thought, my IMMEDIATE next thought was, "Oh, well, you'll do better next time." I can't remember ever having said such a kind thing to myself. It made me smile all over...**Paula**



IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT

The 12 step program is changing my life! And because it only works if you work it, I know I am working it! I am grateful for all of life...I have a great deal and am richly blessed. I am grateful for my sponsor who is showing me how to think differently, which translates into thinking in a healthier manner. Big step today—spewed my emotions in writing, and cried and cried. I did this without whacking anyone else with my "processing party." I let it all out, then was able to think clearly and communicate my needs and perceptions to my husband. I definitely would not have been able to do that a year ago...**Alice**

SO PROUD OF ME

I have great news to report...My 1st EA meeting yesterday was successful. I had one person attend, which is much better than none. This gentleman was so excited about this meeting that it felt great to have paid it forward by starting a group. He said he has waited 8 years to find one in this area.

I'm also jumped a huge hurdle this morning—I stayed home **alone** for the first time in forever! My husband left and I was ready to face it. I knew my sponsor was there for me via phone which helped me feel safe. I knew that if I really needed help with a panic attack that there were people I could call. I was so proud of myself. I have been working so hard on my emotions and my life in therapy and now EA.

I also met a new friend I met on a "Navy Wives Website" for coffee. We had a great chatting and spending time together. All of this accomplished while having my PMS monthly blues. I am still moving one day at a time but facing a fear is always filled with strength and hope for me. I am really growing and I have EA to thank. Thank you to those who prayed and wrote me about starting a meeting. I hope it will grow so that we can keep the meeting place. If not I will continue on and maybe host it in my home. I spent the day in independence, without family for the first in such a long time. I am happy right now and thanking my HP for walking by my side throughout all of this...**Heather**





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SLOGAN 3: ONE DAY AT A TIME



Now, this is a helpful reminder. We all know "what is past is past," even though too often my emotions are based on my past experiences. As for "the future," the goal in my life and my dedication is to improve the current situation, so I need to keep my eye on the future. But the truth is that if I don't focus on today, I won't recognize, and appreciate, both my blessings and my defects of character...**Tyrrel** I've learned in our EA Program that it's possible only to have emotional sobriety for one day—24 hours. Anything else is putting expectations on myself that I really can't handle. Keeping this simple slogan before me during this 24 hour period will pretty much serve to assure me that I can remain emotionally sober for still another 24 hours, leading eventually to years of sobriety. Thank you for this "One Day"...**Gus** When first introduced to "One day at a time", my heart sank. Wasn't that the irresponsible attitude that got me to where I was before recovery? One night, in the depths of self-pity, the understanding, often heard in meetings came, "We can stand anything for one day that we could not face forever." The long, scary night was almost over. A fresh new day was coming!...**Phyllis** Slogan 3 reminds me not to "tackle all my problems at once." My primary responsibility is to take care of myself and my emotional sobriety, and to perform daily tasks. When I lose track of today, I become unable to do anything at all. For some reason my mind likes to leap ahead, sort of like deciding to breathe later, after I am done with more "important" things...**Val** I can only work on today. Yesterday is past and I can only apologize for what I did or forgive others for what they have done. Tomorrow is not here yet. I can only plan for tomorrow but not the results. Today is the only time I can have any control. At my age, there may not be a tomorrow so I work on having serenity and leave the other days alone...**Harold**. With my EA program, I learned to live my life one day at the time. The EA Today's book is a good tool to focus on the day. It has always given me the strengths and the will power to live my life at the present time and not focus too much on yesterday. In the past, I did not have failures, I only had experiences and 10 years in my EA program that made me grow to become the wonderful woman I am today. Tomorrow is not yet born so it is better for me to think about the present given by my Higher Power who is my dear loving God...**France**

EVENTS FAR AND NEAR:

29th Anniversary Public info meeting
 March 31 at 7:45 pm. 130 Broad Blvd,
 Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Cuyahoga
 Falls, OH. For more info call 234-206-1232

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