



May, 2022
Volume 3, Issue 1

Strength & Hope

A message in support of emotional well-being.

SPRING CLEANING — COLLEEN C.

In my part of the world, the warm weather brings a tendency to do some spring cleaning. I dust off cobwebs, vacuum behind couches, touch up paint, wash windows and shake out rugs. I reboot my warm-weather rituals like gardening, long walks and taking my pup to the dog park. Springtime in North America is a beautiful (but often fleeting) thing to enjoy.

I also realize that my mental and emotional health need a little spring cleaning as well. I've fallen away from coming early to meetings and setting up the room. I've gotten a little lazy about making phone calls. My meditation time is brief and I'm more distracted than I was during the colder months. I skip reading my Today book and cancel counseling appointments to do something else, preferably outdoors.

This, for me, is a warning sign. Allowing complacency and the ease of life to overcome my desire for personal growth and growth in the program means I have to "spring clean" my attitude. Luckily, I have been here before and know that discipline and service are the answer. Just like I won't strengthen my muscles if I don't walk or bike daily, I won't strengthen my program without working it each day.

I invite you, too, to recommit to service in EA. There are so many opportunities to do so – from simple things like reaching out to a newcomer, writing a short piece for this newsletter, or becoming a monthly sustaining contributor (<https://donorbox.org/emotionsanonymousinternational>) – to things that have a broader impact, such as applying to become an EA Board of Trustees member (<https://emotionsanonymous.org/about-eai/eai-board-of-trustees-information/>).

Applications are due June 1.

I invite you to celebrate the beauty of the world you live in by strengthening your EA muscles, and to build trust in the Higher Power of your understanding by surrendering to the Twelve Steps. It's not easy, but doing so ensures that we have the humility, gratitude, and resilience needed to get through the darker times – and that the program remains here for all of us and generations to come.

50 TIPS FOR 50 YEARS: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF EAI*

Just For Today, we should not be afraid to work the EA Program, face challenging emotional problems and improve our daily emotional health.

* Item #102

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MAY TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

STEP 5

Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

PROMISE 5

The feelings of uselessness and self-pity lessen.

JUST FOR TODAY 5

I will do somebody a good turn and not get found out. If anyone knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least one thing I don't want to do, and I will perform some small act of love for my neighbor.

SLOGAN 5

First things first.

HELPFUL CONCEPT 5

EA is not a sounding board for continually reviewing our miseries, but a way to learn to detach ourselves from them. Part of our serenity comes from being able to live at peace with unsolved problems.

TRADITION 5

Each group has but one primary purpose: to carry its messages to the person who still suffers from emotional problems.

PRINCIPLE 5

Integrity

MANAGING VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Virtual meetings have been a huge help to be able to continue working the program during the pandemic when face-to-face meetings couldn't be held. It appears that meetings on zoom, conference call, GTM etc. are here to stay!

Many members have shared how helpful it is to be able to access a meeting on their schedule—even when the meeting may have been started 1,000 miles away. We used to field many questions about why there was no meeting in a particular city— now the lack of an in-person meeting isn't a barrier to attending one.

In the spirit of continuing to hold meetings where everyone is not in the same room, we thought it would be helpful to point out our *Guide To Virtual Meetings*, Item #7A. This is available to print off under “Free Publications” on our website and offers a suggested outline and guidelines for both managing and participating in a virtual meeting. We hope you find it helpful.

HEALTHY BEHAVIOR IN VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Meetings held virtually offer great opportunities for connection, but come with their own set of challenges. It is important to know that EA discourages ‘leaders’ of meetings—everyone who attends a meeting can be responsible for some portion of it and running the meeting should rotate among members. However, some folks are more technologically inclined than others and naturally gravitate toward managing a virtual platform.

Healthy meetings allow everyone to express themselves—which may take more effort than when we're in the same room. Those managing the meeting might consider letting everyone know how many people are on the call/virtual platform so speakers can determine how much time they might have to share. Groups can decide together whether participants should be ‘live’, offer a static picture, or are comfortable with an empty square representing those in attendance.

The real key to a healthy meeting—whatever method employed—is to follow the EA guidelines.

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

This month we focus on JFT #5

CONTRIBUTION GRATITUDE

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

Arvada, CO (Hybrid group)
Atlanta, GA groups (2 Zoom groups)
Austin, TX (Zoom group)
Bend, OR groups (3 Zoom groups)
Burlington, IA group
Coon Rapids, MN group
Midwest City, OK group
Perryville, MO group
Sun 2 PM, EDT (Zoom group)
7 Anonymous Individuals

Alexandra S. Deanna B. Kathleen M.
Bob W. Holly V.A. Louis V.
Colleen C. Ian G. Scott J.
Dana J. James K.

IN MEMORY OF:

Tom B., Bob W.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Each year we encourage new members to join the Board of Trustees. This group is responsible for overseeing the financial well-being of the organization, creating and approving new materials, working with me on direction and goals for the organization as a whole. There are many opportunities for service by Board members, including making contact with groups or individuals interested in the learning more about the program, addressing concerns of current members, and identifying new ways to share the program more broadly.

Board meetings are currently held bi-monthly via conference call, with some work by Trustees in between. This program only works when everyone works together—whether that is by attending meetings, writing materials, or Board service. Please consider how you might lend a hand in the coming year!

SELF-COMPASSION — Sarah B.

I had plans today with a friend and she texted last night saying she just found out she has to take her kid to basketball practice and can't meet up. I said "No worries at all!" But today I'm having intrusive suspicious thoughts--the story goes: *"She made up an excuse to get out of hanging out with me. She always does this — she uses her kids to get out of things. She makes plans and then bails all the time. Why can't I find a friend who actually wants to spend time with me? Why am I so unlovable?"* First I imagine the other person is wronging me in some way. Then I make it personal and about their character. And then I make it about my struggles and then I bring it home and tell myself I am fundamentally flawed—if I wasn't, I wouldn't be struggling, I wouldn't be friends with people with poor character, my friend wouldn't have cancelled on me... Huh. Imagine that—if I was better in every way, I could have controlled my friend's kid's basketball coach's change in schedule. And shame on me for not being able to control an action 4 degrees separate from me...

These types of thoughts are regular in my life, but today I am feeling something other than the sadness and self-pity from "I'm unlovable," and the self-disgust from judging myself for having these thoughts at all. I am aware of those two feelings, but there is also something else... *a bit of self compassion.*

I think I'm beginning to allow myself the space to acknowledge I have very low self-esteem. I have resisted this idea as I think of it as pathetic, childish and weak. I am confident and sure of myself! Except when I am not, and then whatever problem in front of me is all my fault—not for anything I did, *but for who I am.* Over the years, I've come back to the idea that my emotional challenges often stem from a foundational belief that I'm not enough, or that people think I'm not worth the trouble. And each time, I think I reach another layer of understanding—a higher point of view each time I come around the spiral staircase.

Today, I feel gentle and kind toward myself. I recognize the thoughts that my friend is ditching me because I'm awful, and also remind myself that those thoughts aren't true. *"I see how you're thinking, and we both know that's just where the mind takes you, but it's not true. Why don't we go read for a bit? Or take a hot shower? Want some tea?"* I am being a friend to myself. I think that is what self-compassion is.

I am enough. And you are enough too, in case you were wondering.

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