



The EA Connection: February 2018

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SHARING MY EA JOURNEY



This month's column, written by Scott J, is a reflection of the Board of Trustees' desire to welcome the many ways to identify a Higher Power.

"Spiritual but not religious." It's a way of viewing the world through a lens of spirituality that is not expressed in terms of religion and religious institutions.

E.A. understands this distinction between religion and spirituality. Concept 7 says: "E.A. is a spiritual program and not a religious program. " We do not advocate any particular belief system." This "boundary set by E.A. founders reminds us to avoid stressing one belief system over another. We never want to advocate for the use of religious terminology to be used in our program.

We use the words "Higher Power" in our literature and prayers very deliberately – these two words emphasize our commitment to being a spiritual program. Personally, I have found a great safe harbor in this phrase as I've sought to experience growth in my spiritual life separate from religion.

The E.A. program is clear that our Higher Power is a force we depend on to help us achieve serenity. Each of us can look to whatever we personally designate as our H.P. to give us strength and wisdom.

Concept 8 lets us know that this Power, that is greater than ourselves, is to be broadly defined. Our HP can be human love, a force for good, the group, nature, the universe. In fact our HP can be any entity that we might select and we can choose how we name it.

Future articles will continue to explore this distinction of spirituality as it relates to religion—as I trust in my Higher Power to guide me in writing what I perceive to be a respectful and humble sharing of my experience, strength and hope when it comes to this topic...Scott J, EA Board of Trustees, VP/Treasure

EA TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

STEP 2: CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

PROMISE 2: WE DO NOT REGRET THE PAST OR WISH TO SHUT THE DOOR ON IT.

SLOGAN 2: YOU ARE NOT ALONE

JFT 2: JUST FOR TODAY I WILL TRY TO BE HAPPY, REALIZING MY HAPPINESS DOES NOT DEPEND ON WHAT OTHERS DO OR SAY OR WHAT HAPPENS AROUND ME. HAPPINESS IS A RESULT OF BEING AT PEACE WITH MYSELF.

TRADITION 2: FOR OUR GROUP PURPOSE THERE IS BUT ONE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY—A LOVING GOD AS HE MAY EXPRESS HIMSELF IN OUR GROUP CONSCIENCE. OUR LEADERS ARE BUT TRUSTED SERVANTS; THEY DO NOT GOVERN.

CONCEPT 2: WE ARE EXPERTS ONLY ON OUR OWN STORIES, HOW WE TRY TO LIVE THE PROGRAM, HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS FOR US, AND WHAT EA HAS DONE FOR US. NO ONE SPEAKS FOR EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS AS A WHOLE.

NEW CHAT ROOM MEETING: ALL ARE WELCOME. NO ACCOUNT REQUIRED
[Chat Room Contact](#) [Meetings Room](#)
Moderated meetings: Wed—Sun 8 p.m. EST
Unmoderated Fellowship: Sat—Sun 3 - 8:00 p.m. EST.

The Loop (EAnon) is our online discussion forum. [Click here more information Loop](#)

OF IMPORTANCE TO GROUPS AND MEMBERS



Effective January, 2018 EA will release an updated print catalog and order form twice each year in January and July. Please be sure you are using the most recent version. The online store will be continuously updated as we add new literature and other items. Please order online for the most current material.

Check the event calendar for special meetings, retreats, or conferences close to you. New notices to [Elaine](#).



RECOVERY USING THE TOOLS OF EA



STEP 2: CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

I came to believe that I could be restored to sanity a little while ago now. People, my life and in recovering people I saw the evidence. But I'm mindful that like any relationship the one with my HP needs attention and all the other ingredients that lead to healthy relationships. Often times without even realizing it, I move away from my HP. Then I blame Him for leaving me until finally I realize that it is I that have moved away from my HP not vice versa. I also need to keep in mind that my mental health, sobriety and ultimately my life are contingent on the maintenance of my spiritual condition and my relationship with God as I understand God.

Step 2 is an ongoing process. My insanity and my mental illness are 2 separate but interlinked things. My insanity was doing the same thing over and over again but expecting a different result. "I know, but this time it will be different". That was my thought pattern for a lot of years and so I kept doing what I was doing and I kept on getting what I was getting.

Faith doesn't come natural to me. My faith ebbs and flows. I'd like to say that my faith is constant and unwavering but that isn't true. The basis of my faith comes from my "bad and painful" experiences. I say that because through hell and high water, my HP has brought me

through it. That is the evidence. Not what my head tells me.

I can't trust my head. It wants me alone, in bed, duvet over my head, isolated, not answering the phone, the door, the mail. It wants me blaming you, and thinking that you are my enemy. Ultimately, I believe that my head wants me dead. The only enemy I have right now, today, is my head. That has been the case for most of my recovery. The anti-venom to my head for me is to stick close to recovering people, work the steps, do the next right thing and cultivate gratitude. Gratitude allows joy to enter into my life. Thanks for being here. Without you, there is no me...*Adam*

Step Two is a step of hope. Without hope, life is a dark hole. I have experienced being in that dark hole but thanks to the EA program I'm choosing not to go there any more...*Carol*

SLOGAN 2: YOU ARE NOT ALONE

I used to think that I was all alone and had no one to rely on but myself. I used to think I had to do everything all on my own and that I had to be totally self-sufficient. Now I know that self-sufficiency is a lie. I need people! So I no longer isolate and try to be a part of not only 12 step groups, but part of life daily. I try to not add misery to any ones life and if I do, I try to make amends right away.

If I am lonely, I try to remember that my Higher Power is always with me. That I truly am never alone, when I remember that, I try to reach out to others. Sometimes I ask my Higher

Power to give me the courage to reach out to someone when I am nervous about it.

I am grateful for those in recovery who keep coming back and keep sharing what works for them. When we share our solutions we are helping others. I like how Concept 5 says: "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." I have learned how to live serenely, even with unsolved problems, by coming to EA meetings. I have learned many solutions which I am grateful for.

When I hear someone dealing with a loss and I see how they are coping by reaching out, that gives me courage to reach out when I am dealing with a loss. And when I hear someone struggling and having a tough time, but hear they are going to meetings, reading literature and praying, I know that they are in the solution which helps. It gives me hope that I can do the same when I am having a tough time.

When I don't isolate, when I keep being a part of Emotions Anonymous, I will never really be alone again and I am so grateful for that! And I will keep being able to hear all the good things I hear in these 12 step rooms and hope by the grace of a loving Higher Power, that I can keep sharing the good things I have learned...*Connie*





DISCOVERING THE TOOLS OF EA



HOW TO LOVE

I am grateful to EA because EA has really taught me how to "love." I definitely used to think love was like banking...you put something in...and get something back...I don't think I consciously knew I was thinking this way until EA. When I started EA, I was so down on life and myself and I really felt like I had lost my capacity to love anything. I felt completely abandoned. I now realize that I was using my love almost like a terrorist. Yes, I did a lot of things that seemed nice but I really did think I was banking good deeds for people to then do for me. This is not love, it is manipulation. I see this now, thanks to EA. Thanks to EA, I realized that I had to begin by taking care of myself in order to really learn what love is...and that I should never do anything for anyone else that I would not do for me, or am not doing for me, this is what *love my neighbor as myself* means, to love me...so I can love others. Now I get that love needs to be given away for free...no strings attached....no expectations...no unspoken contracts. This is a huge concept to understand and it was a huge concept for me to learn to embrace. I now think of love this way, it is a far more peaceful way than I used to think of love. A very unselfish way and a way that helps me to not feel resentful towards people as I only give the love that I can and want to give...Kelly

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE



Unconditional love...Yep...this is a tough one. Can I love another who has just disappointed me? Can I love another who has hurt me? Can I love myself when I make poor choices which bring really bad consequences to my life? On and on these questions roam around inside of my head..

I am a conditional lover! I don't know much about unconditional love. When I was taught by my parents, teachers, and religious leaders they spoke a lot about this unconditional love which God was giving out, but what I received was the conditional stuff. Yep, I got the words., I love you enough to make these tough decisions and you have to understand that I am doing this out of love.. That didn't feel very good, but they were a lot stronger than I was and so they taught me how to do this conditional love stuff.

These nice and good folks were not bad people. They were just teaching with what they learned from others and believed. The problem was that as I attempted to put this into my life, my life began to spin out of control and my emotional problems prevented me from living the life which I wanted to live. I had to find a new way of dealing with my life.

The very first time I went to a 12 Step meeting, I knew that I wanted what these good people had. But, I was very undisciplined and my world had a lot of unfinished business in it . It has been quite a recovery road for me, I needed large doses of pain and suffering before I could let go and let God. I wanted the microwave program and instead got the 12 Steps. I have been at this process for over 25 years and I have made lots of mistakes and poor choices.

I can say that today I have the powerful tools of acceptance, surrender, and forgiveness working to help bring me to unconditional love, which I would like in my life and to extend to others...*Paul*

RESPONSIBILITY WHEN USING THE WORD LOVE



Words are very important to me and are to be used wisely. There is responsibility involved when using the word love. Love is the antidote to all but it cannot always be given freely and honestly by humans. Unconditional love is a tough thing to continually offer. But I try my best and am getting better and better at this.

This love I extend to others is also necessary to extend to myself. I try to be an honest person and at times when dealing with others I have found it quite necessary to be direct with them. This may seem unkind but they have overstepped boundaries and need to be informed. I feel it better they understand than continue to be disillusioned. I try to do this as kindly as I can....it is not always taken as such. Over this I have no control.

I do not and cannot take the word love lightly nor use this term to please someone or to be dishonest with them. I would be doing them and I a great dis-service to lead them into thinking something that is not true. Being kind is one thing, saying things I do not mean to get a result I want is not in any ones best interest...*Twyla*



2017 - 2018 EA Board of Trustees



Please feel free to contact members of the Board with questions or concerns

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THE 12 PRINCIPLES, STEP 2: HOPE

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 **HOPE** factors into Step 2 for them.

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

I like the reflection (Today 1/16) about finding hope, even if my life hasn't become more manageable. For me, when I admit unmanageability, it helps a lot, because that's when I usually am able to surrender and stop trying to fix things that are out of my control. I think my life has become a lot more manageable since I've been in EA, for that reason. I wouldn't say my life is perfect, but it's gotten a lot better since I stopped trying so hard to manage things that weren't mine to manage. I'm very grateful....**Gail**

When I first saw the 2nd step, I thought this is easy. I had started to go to meetings and assumed that in itself was sanity. I may not have found instant sanity I thought was there, but I did find hope, hope in people, the program and God. The people I met knew and understood what it was like to feel alone and I felt safe; in the program I found hope in the Promises, so many of them helped to combat the fear I had inside, and I became reacquainted with the God of my understanding and remembered what it was like to have Him by my side. Many years later, I still find hope through 12 step recovery...**Karen**

Step 2 gave me hope that I could come to believe there was a Higher Power greater than me and all those emotions that were bothering me, in particular extreme anger and sadness. This step gave me hope that I could have sane behavior. I got hope when I saw other members using a Higher Power to help them with sanity in their lives and saw them living sane lives. I found the hope that I needed to change to live a way more peaceful life. After step two, I had hope EA could help me and grateful it has! ...**Connie**

Many things were missing from my childhood. But it wasn't until I committed to working my program that I realized one of the most important things missing was hope. Hope that I will get better. Hope that "this too shall pass." Hope that there is a Higher Power behind me. Now, I have hope. And I believe it is one of the most important things I can have and hold onto...**Chris**

REGIONS OF EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS

REGION 1: NORTHWEST

CAN: AB, BC, MB, ON, SK

USA: AK, ID, MN, MT, ND, OR, SD, WA, WI, WY

REGION 2: SOUTHWEST

USA: AZ, CA, CO, HI, NM, NV, OK, TX, UT

REGION 3: CENTRAL

USA: IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MO, NE

REGION 4: SOUTHEAST

USA: AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV, Puerto Rico

REGION 5: NORTHEAST

CAN: NB, NF, NS, NT, PE, YT

USA: CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT

REGION 6: FRENCH-SPEAKING CANADA

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