



The EA Connection—April 2018



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EA TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

STEP 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

TRADITION 4: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or EA as a whole.

JUST FOR TODAY 4: I will take care of my physical health; I will exercise my mind; I will read something spiritual.

PROMISE 4: No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we see how our experiences can benefit others.

SLOGAN 4: Live and let live.

HELPFUL CONCEPT 4: We do not judge; we do not criticize; we do not argue. We do not give advice regarding personal or family affairs.

NEWS FROM THE ISC DIRECTOR

Your Board of Trustees continues to focus work in two areas: EA finances and creating new materials. Many people don't understand what a nonprofit organization actually is – it doesn't mean that no money is required – we still have rent to pay, lights to keep on, staff that rely on being paid for their work. What it means to be a nonprofit is simply that our focus isn't on making money – our focus is on our mission. EA's mission is "to support individuals with emotional difficulties in their efforts to live a more manageable life by using the Emotions Anonymous Program of recovery." So everything we do focuses on helping EA members. We believe it's a good program that works, and therefore we'd like as many people as possible to know about it. We also want to make sure that our materials (books, pamphlets, workbooks, and the 'miscellaneous' like our bookmarks and anniversary cards etc.) are meeting peoples' needs. So we continue to develop new items; the Book & Literature committee is working on several right now. Being a nonprofit also means we want our community to be involved in our mission. We continue to ask for help – writing material, starting groups, serving on committees or the Board – there are plenty of ways to get involved with EA. One way is to share what you've learned. You may have noticed a new section in this publication last month – 'What I Learned in EA: A Member's Perspective.' I am grateful to the members who have submitted their thoughts and I look forward to sharing them here. Please consider submitting your thoughts to me at: director@emotionsanonymous.org.

Thank you, Elaine Weber Nelson, Executive Director



WHAT I LEARNED IN EA: A MEMBERS SHARE

A: I went to the library and an ABC book in French jumped off the shelf. It occurred to me, much later, that I would like to do an ABC's of EA. Our EA ABC book could start with the 4 A'S: A is for Awareness, Acceptance, Action and Attitude.

B: B stands first of all for **Boundaries**, but there are also words that start with "B" that describe emotional states: **bored**, **bashful** or that describe behavior, like **boastful** and **brave**....

C: Several things come to mind when considering the letter C- Courage, Change, Character and ways we deal with emotions (Cope) that start with C: Contemplation, Caring, Compassion

D: The first word that comes to mind is Decisions.. So many decisions are possible in 12-step recovery. The decision to become well emotionally, the decision to admit that my priorities were skewed, the decision to give this mind-boggling program a chance, and then the decision to make a commitment. In Step 3 there is the decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God. What decisions have shaped your 12-step recovery? ...**Victoria who passed away in February will be missed by members of EAnon, our online forum.**

In Memory of Victoria

Brave, brilliant, and a bit of a rebel. Rest in peace my friend...**Claire, EAnon**

She always encouraged me and was a mentor and a friend...**Kathy, EAnon**



RECOVERY USING THE TOOLS OF EA

STEP 4: MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.

This step will intuitively beckon when, at some level, we understand that in order not to hit a painful bottom, we need to know what we are made of. We make the choice to take our power back by delving into the ultimate healing power, knowledge of our dark and light sides. We ask a lot of questions and we write down our answers. What is the nature of our character? Where do we believe we have erred in our lives and expectations? The searching and fearless moral inventory is one we take with great love, the love of our HP. We find that we begin to reclaim (or find) our power, as we gain in self-knowledge...*Smitty*

Step 4 was an eye opener for me. I prepared this list knowing my deepest darkest secrets were about to come out. I took my time. I was scared to be exposed and vulnerable! I spent years keeping those secrets so no one would know how i had hurt others. I thought "my sponsor is going to hate me for sure and probably dump me!" I tried to postpone that! I really like her! Of all the steps, that was my freedom from guilt, shame and fear. I was accepted bad past and all and she didn't dump me! The acceptance and compassion my sponsor showed me and still shows lead me to freedom. Instead of telling myself how awful I was, I can look at myself as someone who did the best with what I had and yes, I did make some terrible choices but in one instance, my HP was right there even before I

had a program. It was my breaking point, I had a huge falling out with my best friend. I thought she would hate me forever. That was one of the most remembered times when I first met my HP. I surrendered in tears and despair and asked for forgiveness. Not only was I forgiven, I got the gift of my best friend back. Step 4 made me appreciate that gift even more. Step 4 is tough and it can be painful but the rewards are truly wonderful....*Denise*

Although I understand each of the Steps is important, it is Step 4 that was the most important Step for me. This Step made me take a real objective look at myself. And in a way, it turned my life a bit upside down. I had always believed that perfectionism was a good thing. But Step 4 showed me that in my case it was not good at all. Perfectionism has kept me in a state of unhappiness. I never felt I did anything quite good enough. I feared doing new things, because I was so uncertain that I could not do them perfectly...*Carol*

HELPFUL CONCEPT 4: WE DO NOT JUDGE; WE DO NOT CRITICIZE; WE DO NOT ARGUE. WE DO NOT GIVE ADVICE REGARDING PERSONAL OR FAMILY AFFAIRS.

I've come to appreciate the power of avoiding argument in EA, focusing on where we agree. In an "advice free zone" we honor one another's good judgment. Refraining from criticism means no one need feel defensive when sharing, or fear making mistakes. It takes humility to learn a new way of life. I recover by listening closely, taking what's

helpful and leaving the rest...
Anonymous

Just for Today 4: I will take care of my physical health; I will exercise my mind; I will read something spiritual.

I like this Just for Today, it reminds that there are many facets to me that need TLC.

First my physical health, before coming into recovery, this part of me got lost. I stopped taking care of me, I stopped doing the things that had always been meaningful, like doing my nails (as silly as that might sound). I stopped exercising (just too much work). I was always tired, I needed to rest; this may have had something to do with my depression but I didn't know that. I was in therapy at the time. My therapist sent me to a psychiatrist, she thought I was suicidal. I don't know if I was or not, the act of suicide had never crossed my mind, but I did know that I didn't think each day was worth living. The psychiatrist put me on medication and watched me closely for several weeks.

Then I needed to exercise my mind, I started to do this when I found EA. So much to learn, so much to understand. Along with exercising my mind, I found my spirituality. I had drifted away from this also. I remember the day that I walked out the back door, to warmth and sunshine. I felt wonderful, the thought that entered my mind was "this is how it feels to be happy," and I needed to thank the God of my Understanding for being there for me..*Kathy*





DISCOVERING THE TOOLS OF EA

PROMISE 4:

NO MATTER HOW FAR DOWN THE SCALE WE HAVE GONE, WE SEE HOW OUR EXPERIENCES CAN BENEFIT OTHERS.

Promise 4 : "No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we see how our experience can benefit others". So I will share about my progress in the hopes it can benefit someone who is wondering about the EA program. I found EA when I was around 22 years old. My brother was only 18 and killed in a gang fight when he was at the wrong place at the wrong time. I was only age 20 at that time and my whole family turned to drinking and drugs. I was just getting clean and sober and I found that I didn't want to be "crazy" during my sobriety. So I was so grateful to find EA to help me live with more sanity, than insanity. I worked the steps with my sponsor and it really helped me.

I got away from the program and wound up in an alcoholic/abusive marriage. So I left that when the kids were young. Luckily I returned to EA and was happy to find this program again. It gave me hope that I could still be okay emotionally by following this program, even though it was stressful as a single parent mom. I made it through okay with the help of others in this program and other 12 step groups I attend. I did the EA steps again with another sponsor and discovered lots of things to help me. The Just for today's, the slogans, re-reading the steps when stressed, reading stories in the EA book, reading the Loop shares and going to meetings in my town and online. Our EA meeting in our town lasted a few years, but wound up closing due to lack of attendance. So I am grateful that I still started an online EA meeting at eachat.webs.com and am grateful I can attend those meetings weekly with my other 12 step groups I attend.

The main thing that I found in EA was a loving Higher Power who I am willing to turn to daily to help me with lots of things in my life, especially my defects of character which have lessened since I have been in the program. I am so grateful for my Higher Power belief. I am strengthened and comforted when I need it and my Higher Power is only a prayer away. Even if all I say to the Higher Power is "Help" in the morning and "Thank you" at night, I am at least trying to connect daily with that Power greater than me and I know I am being helped with my life.

I didn't even mention that when I was 18, 19 and 20, I wound up in mental wards due to me just being very unwell emotionally. I just couldn't handle my emotions or my life. I would never ask for help from anyone. I stuffed all my feelings down, I overworked myself and I was a real wreck. I had been turning to alcohol, drugs and abusive people and co-dependency and I just was a very unhappy person. Luckily I got help for myself, because I was finally tired of being sick and tired and haven't wound up in those places since. I have had to be honest with others and really know I do not have to do life all alone. There are others in the program who I can talk with and share recovery with. I seek outside help from a Psychologist, too, as part of my emotional well-being.

My life is not all gold and diamonds. In fact, I am very low income, but I have riches of love, peace and serenity when I daily connect with my Higher Power and others on this 12 step journey. For that I am very grateful! I will keep coming back as I know with this program that I have more of a chance at a good life, than without it. Oh and any credit for me being well emotionally always goes to that Power greater than me and my emotional illness! ...**Connie**

One Day at a Time, One Step at a Time

I am sure you have read about Florida's cold snap, this past January, resulting in the iguanas freezing in the trees and dropping off them, then warming up in the sun and climbing back up into the tree. A funny image and it struck me that I have frozen some monsters from my past. It was my favorite way to deal with pain -- deny it, freeze it out, stuff it, ignore it. And yup I had frozen iguanas raining on my head.

A good friend says that we always bury our emotions alive. Well when the warmth of the program and the fellowship started to thaw me out BOOM I had all these "iguanas" to deal with and it was scary! I thank my friends in the program for sticking it out with me and reminding me "one day at a time" and "one step at a time" over time it became manageable and I am becoming more and more free from any lurking iguanas!...**Wren**



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THE 12 PRINCIPLES, STEP 4: COURAGE

STEP 4: MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.

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 **COURAGE** factors into Step 4 for them.

COURAGE (noun) – the ability to face difficulty without fear Benjamin Franklin is credited for having said: “How few there are who have courage enough to own their faults, or resolution enough to mend them” Step 4 is, in reality, about making a commitment to ourselves to grow up. Without courage to face ourselves, we cannot make much progress, but let's be clear, it is not about beating ourselves up. Rather this Step is the key that opens the possibility for freedom from self-defeating ideas, powerfully enabling us to see what's not working and then replacing it with something better. That takes Courage!...*Gus S*

Excerpts from *It Works if You Work it*, pages 38-39

This step, combined with Steps Five, Six, and Seven, awakens our need for acceptance, awareness, and action. We start to see that this program might be a little more than we can handle on our own, and we begin to look around for a 12th step person, counselor, or sponsor to help us out. We're either worried and afraid that this step will expose our souls, or we're looking forward to dumping the mental baggage that's been piling up for all these years. Either way, **COURAGE** will be necessary to continue down this path. If we haven't yet, we'll have to find where our courage lies and how we can tap into it. Perhaps we can't recall facing any change fearlessly, or maybe we've been so fearless as to be reckless in our past pursuits. Certainly the concept of a moral inventory is daunting for anyone. But there it is, the fourth step, can't get to the fifth without it.

EA members say that the most important things to keep in mind while doing your inventory include making sure you've done a strong first, second and third step; be honest and thorough; don't forget to balance each negative item with a positive item about yourself, and break down the time periods in your life or use one of the EA fourth step guides.

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

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