Welcome to ACA. We are very glad that you are here. As newcomers beginning this journey to a spiritual awakening, we may feel all sorts of feelings: relieved, sad, elated, even confused. Soon after arriving, some of us may become comfortable enough to engage in reading ACA literature, find a fellow traveler and take the suggested steps of recovery.

When the Newcomer’s Glow Dims
In our experience, newcomers exhibit an initial glow. The glow from the so-called “pink cloud” of being in ACA will start to fade and we may feel disillusioned. Don’t be disheartened. Many of us thought that the Steps were a magic set of words that, once spoken, would lift the spell of dysfunction. There’s more to ACA recovery than chanting the steps or recounting our stories—a lot more.

Keep the Focus
The dimming of the newcomer’s glow signals the opening of the opportunity to do the healing “work” of getting behind the words, beyond our habits, to the deeper recesses of our subconscious where the conflicts, memories and feeling from our traumatic childhoods have been walled off by the critical survival parents or false selves* who have waited for us to be well enough to process them.

On the Greatness Inside of You
By this point of our recovery process, we may have learned all the ACA terms of recovery, we may have attended a great many meetings, we may have worked the steps a multitude of times, and served in many levels of service. Some may even think we are “the one.” In our experience, you are the only “one”.

Discerning the Distractions and Disguises
As we reach this level of our recovery, the distractions are many and the disguises are especially clever: the boring job, the new/old romantic interest, the lack of funds, etc. We may have worked the steps a multitude of times, attended a great many meetings, we may have worked the steps a multitude of times, and served in many levels of service. Some may even think we are “the one.” In our experience, you are the only “one”.

Healing Work Defined
Processing and integrating our underlying conflicts, memories, and feelings is the core of the healing “work” that allows us to become whole (not dissociated), present (not living in the past/future), and spiritually awakened (not spiritually deadened and numb).

Preparation for the Healing “Work”
We may need to prepare for our integration process. Preparation may require recovery from external (exogenous) addictions to substances. We will also need to recover from any unhealthy dependencies on mentally, behaviorally, or emotionally produced internal (endogenous) addictions.

Seek Physical and Emotional Balance
As the result of this initial deconditioning, we can then seek to recover our original physical and emotional balance (sobriety), and our original goodness—our awakened spiritual consciousness.

Understanding Dependence and Addiction
To understand the healing “work,” we may want to consider that adult children are as unhealthfully dependent on their survival defense mechanisms (critical survival parents or false selves) as alcoholics are on alcohol or as addicts are on substances. To understand what the healing “work” involves, it may be helpful to have a definition of unhealthy dependency and addiction.

Unhealthy Dependence and Addiction Defined
One definition of mental, behavioral, emotional or physical unhealthy dependencies or addictions may be that we have:

- obsessive and/or compulsive (dys-eased or dys-ordered) relationships with
- mindsets, behaviors, feelings or mood/mind altering substances that
- ultimately creates unmanageability in order to
- block traumatic or painful conflicts, memories and feelings that
- our critical survival parents or false selves don’t believe or trust that
- we can resolve, remember or feel (recover).

Safe Processing
Our priority is to safely access, process and integrate the conflicts, memories and feelings that fuel our dependencies or addictions. Unlike substances that must be completely abstained from to achieve physical recovery, our survival defense mechanisms (false selves or critical survival parents)
have to be disengaged safely for integration to occur. Having a ACA fellow traveller will encourage us to stay the course; this cannot be overemphasized.

For the disengagement process to be safe, it is essential the healing “work” be done gently, humorously, lovingly and respectfully (that is, from a True Self or an inner loving parent space), and that we reparent the critical survival parents or false selves, our key defenders/protectors, and inner children, in a nurturing and integrative manner.

When we clear this challenging hurdle with a secure and nurturing grounding (True Self or inner loving parent), we are able to better utilize the Twelve Steps and reparenting tools to further build our physical, mental and spiritual capacity to resolve the conflicts, recollect the exact memories, and express the specific associated feelings that our dependencies or addictions blocked off.

We may want to consider picking a long-haul slogan to remind ourselves of this milestones’ significance when we reach this phase of our spiritual development; and let’s please remember to be gentle, humorous, loving and respectful with our critical survival parent or false self, too. After all, they are our oldest friends, our trusted defenders and our devoted protectors, and they deserve no less.

**Suggested slogans, some funny, for the long-haul:**

- ACA is a way of life that works if you work it. BRB p. 51
- One small step for man, and we still have to do the healing “work”.
- Safely Access, Process and Integrate
- Attend many meetings, read voraciously, share all we want – we still have to do the healing “work”.
- Moving forward by going inward
- We still have to do the healing “work”, sweetheart!
- Stay on Course
- Seriously?! We still have to do the healing “work”.
- Persistent Consistent Active
- Look! Up in the sky, it’s a bird, it’s a plane, no, we still have to do the healing “work”.
- Recollect, Feel, Resolve
- If it’s not one thing, we still have to do the healing “work”.
- Nurturing and Integrative Process For All
- Did we mention, we still have to do the healing “work”? :-)

- Abstinence and Disengagement
- What part of we still have to do the healing “work” do we not understand? :-)
- Talk Trust Feel
- Yoda says, “The healing ’work’ we still have to do.” :-)

**Sharing the Gift of Recovery**

As we progress on our spiritual quest, we are empowered by our experiences to maintain and elevate our spiritual consciousness, foremost with our selves, then in our interactions with our fellow traveler, with other ACAs and especially with newcomers.

No gift is greater than the one we have gratefully and freely received and gladly give away to newcomers who are embarking on this spiritual journey. Sharing the gift of recovery brings us great joy and satisfaction.

The newcomer just walking into ACA usually doesn’t think that recovery is possible, doesn’t believe that the traumatic and painful conflicts, memories and feelings are really behind their unmanageable lives and, if they are behind the newcomer’s unmanageable life, the newcomer doesn’t trust that they are really processable.

Our consistent attendance and humble service in meetings, our honest sharing the experience, strength and hope of our recovery process helps us to keep what we have by giving it away. We reassure them that their spiritual awakening is possible and is indeed a miracle that can be realized if we do the healing “work.”

Doing the healing “work” one day at a time, we have seen the temporary glow of our early days become the permanent radiance of our awakened spirits as we take spiritual flight from our protective cocoons and transform into the unique beings our Higher Power intended us to be. We sincerely thank you for your presence and we invite you to keep coming back. It works if you work it.