

ACA NON-DOMINANT HANDWRITING MEETING

(BEFORE MEETING)

(Meeting Leader:

1. Meeting Leader and Zoom Host - Turn off Notification on Personal Computer
2. Post Inner Child Questions and Inner Child Affirmations below into Chat Box - just before reading Guided Meditation
3. Please leave Chat open for group members to message the group leader as well as each other.)

INNER CHILD QUESTIONS

- ~ What is your name?
- ~ How old are you?
- ~ What do you like? What don't you like?
- ~ What kind of things do you like to do when you play?
- ~ What do you like to eat and drink?
- ~ Where do you like to go on vacation?
- ~ What is your favorite room? or place?
- ~ What are you feeling?
- ~ Happy, sad, scared, mad, or any other feelings?
- ~ If you are not sure, it's ok.
- ~ What might be causing those feelings?
- ~ If you are not sure, it's ok.
- ~ Do you know that I love you?
- ~ If not, how may I show you that I love you?
- ~ What do you feel about me coming to visit you?
- ~ What do you need right now?
- ~ What would you like from me?
- ~ Is there anything you would like to say to the group?
- ~ Is there anything you would not like to say to the group?

INNER CHILD AFFIRMATIONS

- * I keep you safe
- * I protect you and won't let anyone hurt you
- * I listen to you
- * I love you

MEETING OPENING

WELCOME to The Child Within Non-Dominant Handwriting Meeting of Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunction. My name is _____.
I am an Adult Child.

During this online meeting, we keep audio on mute until we share.

I will pause a moment to give everyone a chance to mute audio now...(pause a moment)

(Zoom Host or Group Leader:
Please Mute All now on Zoom)

By Group Conscience, for online meeting safety, we keep our video on throughout the meeting.

Group Members are invited to share childhood and teenage photos.

We meet to connect with our Inner Child in order to recover from the experiences we had as children growing up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional home.

That experience infected us then, and it affects us today.

With the help of our Loving Parent, our Compassionate Self-talk and Affirmations, and a Higher Power of our Understanding, ACA's learn to reparent the Inner Child, the True Self, with Gentleness. ACA's learn to set boundaries with the Critical Parent, one aspect of which is Critical Self-Talk learned in childhood.

As children, we were affected in body, mind, and spirit by alcoholism or other family dysfunction. Our bodies stored the trauma, neglect, and rejection in the form of Post-Traumatic Stress. The mind developed the Laundry List Traits or the False Self to survive. The Inner Child, the true connection to a Higher Power of our Understanding, went into hiding. ACA recovery can reverse this process.

In ACA, we recover in body, mind, and spirit. Through the principles of the program, our bodies are renewed, our minds become clear, and our spirit connects with a Higher Power of our Understanding for an Inner Awakening. This is ACA wholeness for the individual and a sign of wholeness in the ACA program.

Please join me in a moment of silence followed by the **ACA Serenity Prayer**:

“God, grant me the Serenity to accept the people I

cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know that one is me.”

ACA is one of the few Twelve Step groups that embraces the difficult task of trauma work, which can often lead to a journey to the Inner Child or True Self.

We are adults suffering from the effects of alcoholism and dysfunctional families. Childhood abuse, neglect, rejection, and our adult lives created unbearable living conditions in body, mind, and spirit for us as adults. Adult children have been described as the “walking wounded,” strutting about in a state of emotional and spiritual bankruptcy while claiming to be “fine.”

Non-Dominant Handwriting is an open invitation to the vulnerable Inner Child and Inner Teenager to emerge and speak with us directly.

The Big Red Book suggests protecting the Inner Child, which is the True Self. In this group we strive to provide a safe, respectful, and inclusive meeting place for the Adult Child, which we view as critical to achieving our primary purpose: helping the Adult Child to clear the wreckage of the past and to find emotional sobriety.

To keep this meeting as safe as possible for every Adult Child, and to protect the Inner Child, we practice **Anonymity, Confidentiality,** and

Meeting Safety Guidelines:

By Group Conscience to protect the emerging Inner Child, this group uses the same common courtesies at this online meeting as we would when attending an in-person meeting.

By Group Conscience, for online meeting safety, we keep our video on throughout the meeting.

While we would love everyone to attend the full meeting, there are times when we are not able to be fully present and find we must attend to other things. When this occurs, it is more respectful and recommended to electronically leave the online meeting. Repeatedly moving about the video screen or repeatedly attending to outside activities during the meeting isn't something we would do during an in-person meeting and can be interpreted by ACAs as rejection, abandonment, and not being important enough to be heard.

In ACA we endeavor to clear the wreckage of the "Don't Talk," "Don't Trust," "Don't Feel Rule."

During this meeting, we refrain from online "Cross Talk" such as texting, phone calls, side conversations outside or within the group, and other interruptions, which are visible and disruptive to the safety of the group. We remain present, giving our respectful attention to the meeting and each group member as they share, in the same way we would during an in-

person meeting.

The term "Cross Talk" means interrupting, referring to, commenting on, or using the contents of what another person has said during the meeting. We do not cross talk or make reference to what others have said because adult children come from family backgrounds where feelings and perceptions were judged as wrong or defective. A very general statement such as "what has been brought up for me is..." is what might be said instead.

In ACA we use "I" statements as opposed to "we" "you" or "us" when sharing. Self-disclosing is more personal and honest and others are more able to benefit from what is said. We keep the focus on our own lives and our own feelings; we accept without comment what others say, because it is true for them. We work toward taking more responsibility in our own lives rather than giving advice to others.

In ACA we do not attempt to comfort others when they become emotional during an ACA meeting. If someone begins to cry during a meeting, we allow the person to feel their feelings without interruption. To comfort the person is known as "fixing." As children, we tried to fix our parents or to control them with our behavior. In ACA, we are learning to take care of ourselves. We support others by accepting them into our meeting and listening to them. We

allow them to feel their feelings...in peace.

Because some people attending ACA meetings have not grown beyond their victim or victimizer scripts, they may attempt to meet their own needs through the manipulation of other group members, particularly those vulnerable to abuse. This includes predatory behavior which we define as exploiting someone's vulnerabilities for self-serving purposes.

We do not use the ACA program to solicit: recovery, emotional, sexual, romantic, psychological, financial, or any services. This violates the safety of the meeting and can jeopardize attendance of group members. Recovery depends upon Unity. If any person feels unsafe or that someone is using ACA in a way that feels unsafe at any time and for any reason before, during, or after a meeting, we encourage you to share that with a trusted servant of ACA or this group, such as a group member, or a sponsor. We also remind you it does not go against any ACA Traditions to call the proper authorities if someone may have broken the law.

To allow everyone a chance to share, the Group Conscience encourages us, including the leader, to keep our shares to 4 minutes. A time keeper will say "30 seconds" when the share is at 3 minutes, 30 seconds. It's helpful to acknowledge the time keeper was heard by saying "Thank you."

Who would like to volunteer to be our time-keeper for today?

Thank you_____.

This is a description of the Non-Dominant Handwriting Process:

The practice of Non-Dominant Handwriting is an open invitation to connect our Loving Parent with our Inner Child for the purpose of recovering our True Self and our connection with a Higher Power of our Understanding. It is also an invitation for our Loving Parent to set boundaries with our Critical Parent.

While there are many ways to connect with the Inner Child, consider what feels appropriate for you and your Inner Child. You are welcome to use the following suggestions.

You might begin with a notebook or paper and at least 2 different writing instruments, such as pens, pencils, markers, crayons, or whatever and as many as you and your Inner Child wish.

Using the dominant hand, the hand usually used, pick up a writing instrument to ask questions and communicate with the Inner Child. When complete, that writing instrument is put aside until the next communication from the Loving Parent or Adult Self. Next, using the non-dominant hand, the hand we do

not usually use, and a different writing instrument, we invite the Inner Child, our True Self, to reply and communicate with us. Sometimes the Inner Child handwriting may look very childlike and be difficult to read. This is ok.

When practicing Non-Dominant Handwriting in connecting with the Inner Child, some may see images as if watching a scene in a movie or a play, some may hear the child through words or thoughts, and some may feel like it's their imagination. We welcome the Inner Child and write down whatever arises.

As we practice Non-Dominant Handwriting and connect with the Inner Child, each time is it's own experience. Sometimes we become familiar with a part of ourselves that returns again and again to communicate. Other times, we discover a part of ourselves that we have not met before.

While writing with the Inner Child, some are withdrawn, some bold and rush to meet us, some quiet, some tell lies, some are shy. This can sometimes feel like meeting an actual child that needs time to trust and get to know us. Some Inner Children may show a variety of feelings - sad, hopeless, happy, fearful, worried, angry, playful, mischievous, etc.

We welcome them all and know all children are innocent.

All are welcome to use the Inner Child Questions located in the Chat Box, which I will repost in just a moment.

All are invited to connect with your Inner Child the way that feels right and best for you. Perhaps asking the Inner Child questions of your own or communicating through drawing, coloring, or another way.

Begin by finding a comfortable position and noticing your breathing... breathing in and breathing out... as I take a moment to repost the Inner Child Questions into the Chat Box.

Meeting Leader:

Repost Inner Child Questions and Inner Child Affirmations to Chat Box

Zoom Host or Group Leader:

Please Mute All Now

Meeting Leader:

You may choose to read the meditation below OR the ACA BRB Guided Meditation @ bottom of page 276 through the top of page 278

Guided Meditation:

We will begin by relaxing and connecting with our Loving Parent or a Higher Power of our Understanding, which in ACA is our True Parent.

As you breathe, feel the movement of the breath through the body (pause)

Unwinding (pause)

Letting the thoughts come and go (pause)

No need to try, as relaxing is the opposite of trying (pause)

Just allowing and making space and room for yourself, just as you are right now (pause)

Breathing in and breathing out (pause)

Natural breath (pause)

Each breath allows the body simply to be... just as it is in this moment (pause)

Imagine, visualize, or feel....a beautiful lush forest...(pause)

It's very early in the morning and the beautiful silver and golden colors of the sunrise are illuminating bright tendrils of light through the trees on each side of a soft, forest path (pause)

You see a golden dragonfly dancing in the dawn's morning light (pause)

You hear birds singing in the nearby trees.

Take a moment to listen to the morning birdsongs as the birds leave their nests (pause)

As you continue walking on the forest path...in the soft morning light...just ahead...you begin to see a gentle glowing light...a silhouette...where the forest path winds up the gentle sloping hill (pause)

The closer you walk towards the glowing light...the brighter the light... and the lighter the path becomes (pause)

Now you are close enough...you recognize the loving eyes of a very wise and compassionate being (pause)

This being knows you and is full of kindness and love for you (pause)

As you look into these loving eyes... you see a tear fall... moved by their deep love for you... and for all the sorrows and hurts you and your Inner Child have ever known (pause)

As you look more deeply into these loving eyes, you see it is your own Loving Parent, your most compassionate self, or Higher Power of your Understanding, who has been walking towards you - always (pause)

Take a moment to look into the loving eyes (pause)

Feel the love and compassion for you (pause)

Allow yourself to ask anything you wish of this loving, wise, and kind being (pause for 10 seconds minimum)

Perhaps you would like a hug... or to be enfolded in love and compassion (pause)

If you wish, allow yourself to feel enfolded in the gentle, safe, warm, lovingkindness and acceptance (pause for 10 seconds minimum)

Continue enjoying this feeling...

(Pause 10 seconds minimum)

(Pause a few seconds or breaths after each sentence below:)

**As you continue to feel the presence of love for you...
you breathe a slow natural breath...**

Feel the freshness of the forest air...

**Continue feeling the lovingkindness and compassion of this
loving presence...as you journey on together...**

**As you continue on journeying slowly, gently upward... the
forest path lifts you, and you feel the cool, spring morning air,
so cool and so crisp, against your skin...and it smells so fresh...
You can see the mountain mist rising on the path below you.
You hear the sweet and distant sounds of birdsongs now
below.**

**Imagine feel or picture... from the top of the forest path, you
can see the whole forest valley below you...**

**Just below, in the lush green forest valley, you can see a group
of kids playing all around, some in lush green fields, and some
on a playground... (pause 10 seconds)**

**You hear the sounds of their voices and their laughter...
(pause 10 seconds)**

Take a few moments to look at all the kids...

**Some are playing games or ball, others racing through the
grass and fields, some swinging or playing on the monkey
bars, some sitting together talking and laughing, or sitting by
themselves, and some may be fighting...**

(pause 10 seconds)

**Look at all the children... Some may have dark skin...or light skin, freckles, sunburned cheeks... Some have short hair...or long hair, and may be wearing braids or pigtails... Some kids may have blonde hair...or red hair...some have brown or black hair. Some are dirty from playing in the grass. Some might have food stains on their clothes from a picnic lunch or juice on their mouths. Some may be sweaty from running, biking, or wheeling around, playing games...and some may be very clean and you can tell they don't want to get dirty...
(pause 10 seconds)**

**Imagine that as you are watching all of the children, one child breaks away from the group and approaches you...
(pause 10 seconds)**

As the child gets closer, you realize it is you at a young age...(pause 10 seconds)

**Take a few moments to observe the child...
(pause 10 seconds)**

What is the child wearing? (pause 10 seconds)

How old is the child? (pause 10 seconds)

Look into the child's eyes... (pause 10 seconds)

What do you notice? (pause 10 seconds)

Approach the child and make contact in whatever way you

sense would be appropriate right now...(pause 10 seconds)

Spend a little time being with your child...

(pause 10 seconds)

Allow the child to guide you, whether playing together or simply sitting close or holding each other...

(pause 10 seconds)

You may give the child a hug, or whatever feels comfortable for you and the child...(pause 10 seconds)

Continue being with your child.... Let the child know that you want to be in contact as much as you can from now on...(pause 10 seconds)

Let the child know you would like to spend some time together, just you and the child...(pause 10 seconds)

Let the child know how important they are to you... That you would like to get to know them better...and that you will be doing that by journaling with them in just a moment...(pause 10 seconds)

Invite the child to stay with you...(pause 10 seconds)

Gently... slowly... begin to walk back towards the forest path... feeling all your feelings... feeling the body...feeling alive... feeling energized... balanced and centered...(pause 10 seconds)

As you step back onto the forest path, you become aware of your whole body... breathing in and breathing out... and when you feel ready... taking all the time you need... in your own time... and in your own way...

Breathing in and breathing out... breathing into the body... slow, deep breaths... allowing the breath to awaken the body... beginning to return... wiggling fingers... and wiggling toes... feeling the body coming all the way back into the room... taking all the time you need... and when you are ready... wiggling fingers... wiggling toes... feeling the weight of the body... feeling the weight of the body in space... coming all the way back into the body.... and when you are ready.... opening your eyes... and coming all the way back to the here and now...

(pause 30 seconds - or longer if desired)

At this time we will continue together in silence. You are now welcome to begin Non-Dominant Handwriting with your Inner Child.

In 12 minutes, the Group Leader will return and let you know you will have 2 minutes to complete your communications.

(After 12 min)

Please take the next 2 minutes to wrap-up your communications with your Inner Child.

(After 2 min Group Leader resumes)

Take a moment to thank your Inner Child for all they have shared... (pause for 10 seconds)

Invite your Inner Child to remain with you...(pause for 10 seconds)

Let your Inner Child know that they are important to you... (pause for 10 seconds)

By Group Conscience, we keep our videos turned on throughout the sharing portion of the meeting.

If you are able, please use the Zoom Raise Hand feature or if not, raise your hand to indicate you would like to share.

(Zoom Host or Group Leader:)
PLEASE UNMUTE ALL NOW

The Meeting Is Now Open For Sharing

Who would like to share? (pause)

(Close Meeting* at 5 min before end time)

Thank you, that's all the time we have.

Please take a moment to thank your Inner Child for all they have shared... (pause for 10 seconds)

You are welcome to invite your Inner Child to remain with you... (pause 10 seconds)

Let your Inner Child know they are very important to you... (pause for 10 seconds)

Invite your Inner Child to join us together in saying the Inner Child Affirmations:

***I keep you safe**

***I protect you**

***I listen to you**

***I love you**

If you didn't have a chance to share during the meeting, please reach out and share after the meeting.

If through this process strong feelings have emerged and further support is needed, please reach out after the meeting and/or to a therapist for outside help.

For safety purposes on Zoom, we do not post a group phone list, so please reach out to one another and are welcome to share your contact info in the Zoom chat feature after the meeting.

According to ACA's 7th Tradition, this meeting is self-supporting through it's own voluntary contributions. Your donations support our online rent on Zoom. If you are able, please donate through Zelle to phone number associated with this meeting 561-371-8297.

The Business Meeting is held the 1st Monday of the Month after the meeting, as needed.

Are there any ACA related Announcements?

Would all who care to join me in a moment of silence followed by the **ACA Serenity Prayer**:

“God, Grant me the Serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the Courage to change to one I can, and the Wisdom to know that one is me.”

*Format written by Julia D, The Child Within, ACA South Florida, March, 2020