

We Agnostics ACA

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Working the 12-steps From a Secular Perspective

2021 ACA Annual World Convention

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We Agnostics meets three days a week.

**Tuesday 7:00 am Eastern Time
Thursday 6:00 pm Eastern Time
Sunday 6:00 pm Eastern Time**

The Zoom information is the same for all three meetings.

**Meeting ID: 814 3727 6969
Passcode: 247365**

- Step 1 – Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Insight, Honesty
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** We admitted we were powerless over the effects of alcoholism or other family dysfunction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
 - **Tony A’s Twelve Steps:** We admitted we were powerless over the effects of living with alcoholism and that our lives had become unmanageable.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I get it: What I’ve been doing is self-destructive. I need to change.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Admit we are powerless over other people, random events and our own persistent negative behaviors, and that when we forget this, our lives become unmanageable.
 - **12 Protocols for Living (Originally known as The 12 Steps Reimagined for Adult Children):** I can’t control my life or the people in it, no matter how hard I try; I’m miserable. I want to change, and I don’t know how.

- Step 2 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Hope, Faith
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
 - **Tony A’s Twelve Steps:** We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could bring us clarity.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I see the big pictures: The way to stop relapsing into self-destructive behaviors is to build a healthier sense of self.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Came to believe that spiritual resources can provide power for our restoration and ‘healing.’
 - **12 Protocols for Living:** I’m willing to do whatever it takes to feel better about myself, even if that means listening to others; I haven’t figured it out on my own, so I have nothing to lose.

- Step 3 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Decision, Acceptance, Action
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God.
 - **Tony A’s Twelve Steps:** We made a decision to practice self-love and to trust in a Higher Power of our understanding.

- **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I have an action plan: From now on, I am squarely facing everything that is in the way of feeling really satisfied with my life.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Make a decision to be open to spiritual energy as we take deliberate action for change in our lives.
 - **12 Protocols for Living:** I've decided I'm accountable for my recovery. I will learn to ask for help as I explore my life, my decisions, and my behavior, knowing this will be uncomfortable and take more time to accomplish than I want.
- Step 4 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Self-Examination, Personal honesty, Self-Acceptance
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
 - **Tony A's Twelve Steps:** We made a searching and blameless inventory of our parents because, in essence, we had become them.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I honestly look at the effects of my actions on others and myself.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Search honestly and deeply within ourselves to know the exact nature of our actions, thoughts and emotions.
 - **12 Protocols for Living:** I create a written historical account of the people who impacted my life as a child, both positively and negatively. I determine the stories I told myself then and how I continue to act out those stories in my adult life.
- Step 5 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Trust, Personal Integrity
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
 - **Tony A's Twelve Steps:** We admitted to our Higher Power, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our childhood abandonment.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I take responsibility for my actions.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Will talk to another person about our exact nature.
 - **12 Protocols for Living:** I read this written account of my childhood aloud, including the stories I'm telling myself as an adult, to a person I trust.

- Step 6 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Willingness to Change
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
 - **Tony A's Twelve Steps:** We were entirely ready to begin the healing process with the aid of our Higher Power.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I see that my knee-jerk reactions have to do with being in the grip of more or less conscious fears.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Be entirely ready to acknowledge our abiding strength and release our personal shortcomings.
 - **12 Protocols for Living:** I use what I learned in my written inventory to determine the coping mechanisms that keep me from living the life I want. I use this as a foundation to learn new patterns of behavior.

- Step 7 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Personal Responsibility, Involvement in Change, Courage, Humility, Self-Discipline
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
 - **Tony A's Twelve Steps:** We humbly asked our Higher Power to help us with our healing process.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I strive to find my motivation in a deeper sense
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Work honestly, humbly and courageously to develop our assets and to release our personal shortcomings.
 - **12 Protocols for Living:** I actively learn to challenge the stories I tell myself by pausing when I recognize them, considering my options and acting in healthier ways, rather than reacting without thought.

- Step 8 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Compassion, Personal honesty, Accountability
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
 - **Tony A's Twelve Steps:** We became willing to open ourselves to receive the unconditional love of our Higher Power.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I stop blaming and feeling blamed, with a willingness to heal the wounds.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** List all people we have harmed, including ourselves, and be willing to make amends to them all. Be willing to forgive those who have harmed us.

- **12 Protocols for Living:** I create a list of my childhood needs that were not met and acknowledge how I can meet them today via self-exploration and healthier patterns of behavior.

- Step 9 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Compassion, Change, Honesty, Responsibility, Forgiveness, Self-Discipline
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
 - **Tony A's Twelve Steps:** We became willing to accept our own unconditional love by understanding that our Higher Power loves us unconditionally.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I swallow my pride, and sincerely apologize to people I've hurt, except when this would be counterproductive.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Whenever possible, we will carry out unconditional amends to those we have hurt, including ourselves, except when to do so would cause harm.
 - **12 Protocols for Living:** I recognize my coping mechanisms are a direct result of childhood experiences and not my fault. I make daily amend by learning to live my life with self-respect, love, and compassion.

- Step 10 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Perseverance, Integrity
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
 - **Tony A's Twelve Steps:** We continued to take personal inventory and to love and approve of ourselves.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I live mindfully, paying attention to the motives and effects of my actions.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Continue to monitor ourselves, to acknowledge our successes and quickly correct our lapses and errors.
 - **12 Protocols for Living:** At the end of my day, I reflect on my behavior and consider how my actions moved me forward in recovery. I promptly acknowledge the behaviors I don't want to repeat.

- Step 11 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Openness, Connection to Life, Spiritual Resources

- **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
 - **Tony A's Twelve Steps:** We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power, praying only for knowledge of it's will for us and the power to carry it out.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** I stay in touch with a broader sense of what I really want.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Increasingly engage spiritual energy and awareness to continue to grow in abiding strength and wisdom and in the enjoyment of life.
 - **12 Protocols for Living:** I take time for self-reflection and meditation as I continue to improve my relationship with my essential self. This allows me to deepen my relations with others.
- Step 12 - Spiritual/Essential-Self Principles: Commitment, Service to Others, Self-Discipline
 - **Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
 - **Tony A's Twelve Steps:** We have had a spiritual awakening as a result of taking these steps, and we continue to love ourselves and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
 - **The Proactive Twelve Steps:** A growing sense of wholeness and contentment motivates me to keep at it, and to share this process with others who are struggling.
 - **The Alternative 12 Steps:** Practice the principles of these Steps in all our affairs and carry the 12-Step message to others.
 - **12 Protocols for Living:** I am energized and excited by the profound changes in my life and sustain them by providing service, assuring recovery is available to those in need.

Book List/Websites to Explore

(This is a list of resources compiled by members of We Agnostics. Think of this list as personal experience, strength and hope much as you would the shares heard in a meeting.)

12-Step Recovery ACA Literature and Alternative Literature

- **Adult Children of Alcoholics** (Big Red Book) - available from adultchildren.org
- **Tony A's Twelve Steps** - Tony A did write a book called The Laundry List (you might try your favorite bookseller, if interested)
- **The Proactive Twelve Steps For Mindful Recovery** by Serge Prengel - available as a free download from: Secular Alternative 12 Steps without God
- **The Alternative 12 Steps A Secular Guide to Recovery** (2nd Edition) by Martha Cleveland, Ph.D. and Arlys G. (you might try your favorite bookseller, if interested)
- **Beyond Belief (agnostic musings for 12 step life)** Forward by Ernest Kurtz, Ph.D. (again, your favorite bookseller)
- <https://realisticrecovery.wordpress.com/2014/06/16/the-proactive-twelve-steps-for-mindful-recovery/>
- **One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps** by Kevin Griffin

Healing from Trauma

- **Lifeskills for Adult Children** by Janet Geringer Woititz, Ed.D. and Alan Garner, M.A.
- **Struggle for Intimacy** by Janet G. Woititz
- **Adult Children of Alcoholics** by Janet Geringer Woititz, Ed.D.
- **The Body Keeps the Score Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma** by Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D.
- **COMPLEX PTSD: From Surviving to Thriving** by Pete Walker
- **Rewire Your Anxious Brain: how to use the neuroscience of fear to end anxiety, panic & worry** by Catherine M. Pittman, Ph.D and Elizabeth M. Karle, MLIS
- **Homecoming** by John Bradshaw
- **Perfect Daughters: Adult Daughters of Alcoholics** by Robert J. Ackerman, Ph.D.
- **The Mindful Way Workbook: An 8-Week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress** by John Teasdale, Mark Williams and Zindel Segal
- **Out of the Fog: Moving from Confusion to Clarity After Narcissistic Abuse** by Dana Morningstar
- **In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction** by Gabor Mate, M.D. (Any book by Gabor Mate is worth exploring)
- **Learning to Thrive: An Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Workbook** by Giulia Suro, PhD