

Good evening and welcome to **Connecting with Your Inner Child Through Journaling and Art**, the second in our Monthly Workshop Series hosted by SFBayArea Intergroup.

My name is _____ and I am an adult child.

Please remember our **spiritual principle of anonymity** as this workshop is being broadcast and will also be recorded and distributed later. We therefore ask that you please rename yourself in the participants screen to show only your first name and last initial.

During the workshop, only the active speakers will be unmuted. When volunteering to share please use the raise hand feature in the participants screen and the host will unmute you when it's your time to share.

Now, please join me in our **ACA Serenity Prayer**. [**Taking a deep breath**] God...

A couple of quick **announcements** before we begin, which will also be posted in the chat box shortly:

- This is the second in a series of workshops leading up to the **2022 ACA Annual Business Conference & Annual World Convention** in the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Both the Intergroup and 2022 Host Committee have **open service positions** available. For example, Intergroup Events Chair and 2022 Volunteer Coordinator. For more information, or to subscribe to ACASFBayArea Workshop Announcements, please email ACABayArea@gmail.com
- The SFBayArea Intergroup is making tonight's workshop FREE to our members and guests. Funds collected from tonight's **7th Tradition** will help offset the cost of future workshops and activities at our 2022 Convention. You may contribute to tonight's 7th Tradition via Venmo at
 - venmo.com/ACASFBayArea
 - @ACASFBayArea
 - 415-305-2123

Now, let me please introduce our featured presenters **Jim B and Gary S**

Let's read about the terms from the Big Red Book about the Inner Child, Critical Parent and Loving Parent.

Inner Child – *The original person, being, or force which we truly are. Some ACA members call this the True Self.*

False - Self – *The addicted, disassociated, or codependent self.*

Critical Parent – *The hypercritical and judgmental voice that frequently finds fault in our thoughts and actions. This includes the frequent blaming and shaming of ourselves and others.*

Loving Parent or Reparenting – *The inner parent we can develop from the part of us that took action to care for ourselves as children and which can be awakened in recovery. The first step in reparenting ourselves involves recognizing the loving voice inside. Our experience shows that every adult child has love inside regardless of what the person says or believes. Love is there and it is original. As we awaken the Loving Parent inside, we remember a simple slogan: "First Things First".*

Tools and Techniques for connecting with our inner child - Page 304-306 from the Big Red Book Chapter 8, The solution: Becoming your own Loving Parent

Tools for connecting with the Inner Child can be counseling, journaling, and guided meditation in addition to attending ACA meetings. Childhood pictures are a great tool to connect with the child that still dwells within us.

As mentioned, there is non-dominant handwriting in which we write out a question to our Inner Child with our dominant hand (the hand we use to sign our name). Then we write the response to the question by placing the pen in the opposite hand. We might write out: "Hello, Little Johnny or Little Marie. I would like to talk to you and to introduce myself. How have you been? I am here to listen to you if you would like to talk." Write down any response with the non-dominant hand. The thoughts may be random or incomplete sentences, but we write down what comes to mind without judging ourselves. We keep an open mind. We do not try to force solutions or results. We will get results if we are patient and consistent with the exercise.

After introducing ourselves to the child within, we can ask other questions. We write out the question with our dominant hand and write the reply with the other hand. We can talk to others about how they connected with their Inner Child, but we are mindful to be true to our own connection. We do not have to impress anyone or

embellish any response. This exercise can literally speak for itself when practiced often.

Other tools for connecting with the Inner Child can involve drawing or painting pictures of our family. We can go to our old school-house and sketch the playground, or we can visit a favorite spot and draw or doodle. Sketching our family may reveal insights as to how we felt growing up. We do not have to be professional artists to do this exercise. Stick figures can work just as well. Some pictures may help express what words cannot. The drawings can be done with our dominant or nondominant hand. There is no limit on what scenes can be drawn.

We can listen to music or dance as part of connecting with the Inner Child or True Self. Moving our bodies to music (or without music) can stir memories and feelings. Listening to various forms of music can help us tap into memories and feelings as well. Nursery rhymes, hymns, or songs our parents listened to will help us remember our childhood and the child within. These activities tend to access areas of our subconscious that we have not visited for many years. Feelings and memories will emerge if we are consistent with these methods. For many of us we learned to tune out our true feelings because it was too painful to admit we were neglected, abused, or mistreated in various ways. We locked away events of our lives. As adults we learn to free ourselves from our self-imposed prisons. We give ourselves permission to feel and to be truly alive.

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Sharing Portion – Does anyone want to share on your experience with your Inner child or children, your Loving Parent, or dealing with your Critical Parent. Or about the photograph of you as a child. Please raise your hand in the participants window. We will do 1 Minute Shares.

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June 19 Non-Dominant Hand

“After introducing ourselves to the child within, we can ask other questions. We write out the question with our dominant hand and write the reply with the other hand.” BRB p. 305

We used to be afraid of our feelings. We thought we knew how we felt. We knew all about how others felt at all times, but we never developed the discipline of listening to ourselves because we were punished in our families for doing so. Some of us recreated that same punishing silence within ourselves in our work and romantic relationships.

When the hurt becomes too great, we are willing to go to any lengths to recover. We do things that are scary because we are building trust with our sponsor, fellow travelers, and our Higher Power. We seek the answers to our past, however we can find them. Non-dominant handwriting is an important tool in getting to early memories. We try answering questions by writing in crayon with our non-dominant hand. It has worked for others before us.

Most importantly, we are building trust with those voices inside us that have needed to speak for longer than long. They want to contact us and discharge the poison they have been holding back to save us from pain. We start to feel safer as we begin to heal and become ready to hear “our history.”

On this day I will trust the messages I get doing non-dominant handwriting, because what is said is true for that part of me. I will listen without trying to push the feelings back down. I will give the words inside me a space to breathe.

Some notes on the writing process

- There are many ways to do journaling, try different things and see what works for you.
- Let it flow naturally
- Don't worry about your handwriting – it is ok
- Your inner child may have a different name or names – you can ask them
- Your inner child may want to express themselves with art and drawings or symbols
- Be loving and patient with the process

INNER CHILD VISUALIZATION

Get comfortable. Be sure your back is supported so you can sit up straight.

Take a deep breath, and as you exhale, relax your body.

Take another deep breath, and as you exhale, relax your body, deeper and deeper

Take another deep breath, and as you exhale, imagine relaxing your body as completely as you can

Your whole body is now completely relaxed, you may shut your eyes if you like.

Let your thoughts float away, let your mind come into stillness and quiet

Imagine moving your awareness into a deep, quiet place inside of you.

It's a beautiful, sunny, spring day and you can hear the sound of birds chirping. Imagine that you're walking down a sidewalk and you come to an elementary school with kids playing outside on the playground. You hear their laughter.

Take a few moments to look at all the kids playing games, swinging, playing on the monkey bars, sitting by themselves, talking, laughing, maybe fighting!

Look at all the children. Some may have freckles, pigtails, red hair, blonde, brunette, black hair and more, some are dirty from playing outdoors, some might have food stains on their clothes from lunch, or the remains of chocolate milk on their mouth, some are sweaty from running around, some may be very clean and you can tell they don't want to get dirty.

Imagine that as you are watching all of the children, one child breaks away from the group and approaches you

As the child gets closer to you, you realize it is you at a young age.

Take a few moments to observe them. What are they wearing? How old are they?

Approach the child and make contact in whatever way makes sense for you right now.

Spend a little time simply being with them. Allow your inner child to guide you in the appropriate way to be with them, whether playing together or simply sitting close or holding each other.

Continue to be with your inner child.... Let them know that you are happy to have met them and that you want to connect with them as much as you can from now on.

Tell the child that you would like to get to know them better and that you will be doing that by journaling with them in a couple of minutes.

Complete your time together for now in whatever way feels good for both of you. Give your inner child a hug, a kiss, or whatever feels comfortable for you.

Begin to walk away from the school feeling alive, filled with energy, balanced and centered.

Start to become aware of your body in the room, and when you feel ready, open your eyes and be present back in the workshop.

We will take about 10 minutes to do some writing and/or drawing. You can have a simple dialogue with your inner child or just let them talk 😊 You can also do some drawings to help identify feelings from your inner child or loving parent.

We will now do 15 minutes of sharing to hear how the writing or drawing experience was for you. 1 Minute shares – please raise your virtual hand and a host will unmute you.

We will now Pass the virtual Basket for San Francisco Intergroup. Funds collected will help the ACA World Convention coming to the Bay Area in April 2022. The information is being shared in chat now, venmo.com/ACASFBayArea, @ACASFBayArea, 415-305-2123.

The acasfbayarea.org events page has resources for:

- The guided meditation recording that we will be doing today
- References to the Big Red Book sections on connecting with the inner child, and a different guided meditation from Step 11 in chapter 7
- References to the **Loving Parent Check in** at acawso.org and ACA meetings doing the practice
- A weekly ACA meeting that does a guided meditation and journaling. 7pm Pacific – CAN0368 – Check the online meeting list at adultchildren.org
- Links to audio recordings from another ACA workshop on Journaling and Art, http://www.acaconvention.org/html/2008_speakers.htm

Let's read the Inner child Affirmations from Chapter 8

Inner Child Affirmations

- 1. I will listen to my Inner Child not with fear but with openness.*
- 2. I love my Inner Child unconditionally.*
- 3. I will try to be patient with my Inner Child.*
- 4. I will use humor with my Inner Child.*
- 5. I will try to establish trust with my Inner Child.*
- 6. I will be gentle with my Inner Child.*
- 7. I will try to do praise exercises with my Inner Child*
- 8. I will validate my Inner Child's feelings.*
- 9. I will love this Child for all she or he has had to defend against.*
- 10. I will negotiate with my Inner Child fairly.*
- 11. I will look for opportunities to celebrate with my Inner Child.*
- 12. I will protect my Inner Child to the best of my ability.*
- 13. I will integrate my Inner Child into my life through play, creativity, and spirituality.*
- 14. I will respect my Inner Child.*
- 15. I will try being intimate with my Inner Child.*
- 16. I will allow my Inner Child to express their feelings and thoughts.*
- 17. I will try to follow through on promises I make to my Inner Child.*
- 18. I will take time to become my own Loving Parent.*

Finally Let's close with the Meditation from the end of Chapter 8 in the Big Red Book.

Higher Power. Help me to be willing to recognize the Loving Parent inside of me. Help me integrate my Inner Child more actively into my daily life so that I remain awake spiritually. Grant me the courage to change the things I can. Grant me the wisdom of my Inner Child.

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