

We welcome you to this meeting of Adult Children of Alcoholics. Many of us coming to these meetings were distressed and in some stage of unresolved grief. We felt that we had lost or given up so much in our lives that we had nothing more to give. We needed to understand what happened to us as children. We needed to validate the reality that there was a problem; that it just wasn't our imaginations.

We give up nothing except our denial. We need no longer continue doing what we did as children to survive. We need to free ourselves from the pain of our past. We need to come out of our dreamlike state, dropping layers of denial. We need to lose our extreme need for control. We need to put some order to the many years of seeking answers in books, psychotherapy, self-reliance and conversations with friends and professionals who don't understand and can't help.

Today, realizing that it was all valuable and part of a growth experience that brought us to this new beginning, we now enter into a process of self-discovery. The twelve steps of ACOA contain a solution for dealing with the alcoholism in our family of origin and its effect on our character. In ACOA we work through our states of grief and express the feelings and emotions that we never allowed ourselves to feel and express in our own families. We do this by sharing "what happened" and "what's happening now" in a safe and loving environment; and by working a program based on the Twelve Suggested Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. By recreating in the present what happened to us as children, we can break the bondage of survival patterns which are holdovers from our traumatic childhoods, deal with unresolved problems in our past, and learn to live full lives.

At this meeting you can expect to get in touch with emotions you have denied until now. It may be fear; it may be anger; it may be unexpressed love; it may be all of these emotions and more. If you have a simple heartfelt desire for happy and effective living, then we hope you will join us as we give freely of what we have found.