

ASCA News • June 2001

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From the Desk of George J. Bilotta, Ph.D.

Addressing the somewhat controversial topic of forgiveness will be the focus in this issue's Step Elaboration article. Your feedback on May's issue of the *ASCA News* encouraged me to elaborate more on Step 18 instead of shifting to Step 19 as previously intended.

As with all *ASCA News* articles, I invite you to share your unique perspective through feedback and/or through writing an article. There are many valuable perspectives from which we can learn and grow. Part of the *ASCA News* is like an ASCA meeting. We share our stories and personal perspectives on recovery from childhood abuse. In turn we have an opportunity to grow from reading and trying to understand alternative points of view. Our guidelines for submitting feedback or an article parallel our standard ASCA meeting guidelines.

In the Ongoing Education section, I note some helpful ways to provide feedback to THE MORRIS CENTER's Board or to me. We encourage your feedback. We want your feedback. We are open to your feedback. Give us your feedback.

There is no Topic article included in this issue. If your meeting requires a topic for a Rotation C meeting, one suggestion would be to use my Reflective Moment piece on *Dealing with Reality*. Another suggestion would be to select from a past topic. Past topics for Rotation C meetings can be located in the *Meeting Format and Support Materials* manual available on our web page: www.ascasupport.org ([Suggested Topics for Rotation C Meetings](#)). A meeting can also select any topic that the meeting membership might find helpful. Recall that in the May 2001 issue there is a discussion concerning selecting helpful topics for rotation C meeting. These guidelines might be helpful to review.

I am seeking a couple of volunteers with editing skills to help prepare the *ASCA News* for publication. If you have editing talent and have some time to assist us, please contact me for details. The editor's position would involve receiving an article or two via e-mail around the middle of the month. Volunteer editors would have a week to edit and return the article(s) to me. Editors could help out every month or as often as your time permits.

I hope you are starting to enjoy the lazy hazy crazy days of summer. For ASCA members in South Africa I hope that the fall season has been bountiful and that a restful period of winter awaits you.



A Reflective Moment for June by George J. Bilotta, Ph.D

Dealing With Reality: Fighting, Surrendering, Accepting

In many of my articles I mention or allude in one way or another to the importance of dealing with reality. In this Reflective Moment article I want to share with you some of my ideas surrounding the concepts of fighting reality, surrendering to reality and accepting reality. Dealing with reality seems to be an essential underlining dynamic within the integration process of ASCA Steps 2, 5, 8, 9, 11, 17 and 18.

What Is Reality?

Philosophers have been discussing this issue for several millennia. I will not attempt to add to this philosophical debate. For our use, let us agree that reality simply dwells within the arenas of that which is true, factual, correct, accurate and/or authentic. To quote a contractor that inspected my house many years ago — *it is what it is. It is what it is*, was my contractor's definition of reality. The front stairs were sagging. *It is what it is. What do you want to do about it, if anything?*

What Is Dealing with Reality?

From my contractor's perspective dealing with reality resonated throughout his statements: *It is what it is. What do you want to do about it, if anything?* Dealing with reality means to respond forthrightly and firmly to that which is true, factual and correct. In a sense, dealing with reality seems to be the opposite of denying, minimizing, avoiding and procrastinating. Perhaps the bigger problem in dealing with reality resides with the eyes, ears and heart. If our eyes are covered, if our ears are blocked, if our heart is closed, then what we see, hear and feel is probably distorted, i.e., we take-in only part of our reality. Dealing with reality means first cultivating the capacity to accurately identify and understand the truth of a situation. Second, dealing with reality means to respond forthrightly and firmly to the situation.

An Everyday Type Example

I will use the following example to try to illustrate the concepts of fighting, surrendering to and accepting reality. The other day I was issued a parking ticket. I thought that I had parked in a legal space. I had checked for signs stating *No Parking* around my car. Furthermore, there were many other cars parked in back and in front of my car. I assumed that it was legal to park in that particular space.

When I returned several hours later, I had a parking ticket waiting for me on my front windshield. For a moment I felt annoyed, agitated and angry. Then I felt confused and curious. I looked around. I saw a few other cars with tickets. I walked back toward the intersection. There were no signs prohibiting parking. As I drove off and as I approached the end of the block, I noticed a sign — *No Parking*. For reasons unbeknown to me, the *No Parking* signs that should have been located along the street were there.

The reality was that I was issued a parking ticket. I needed to deal with this reality in some way. I had several basic options. I could fight the ticket in parking court, pay the fine or ignore the ticket.

While driving home, I considered fighting the ticket in court. It appeared to me that an injustice, unfairness, had been done to me. It seemed to me that with only one *No Parking* sign located

at the end of a long city block, that the city had failed to properly give warning in that particular area. I thought that I had a reasonable chance at having the ticket overturned.

Then I considered the time and effort of overturning a parking ticket. I decided that it was not worth the time, energy and hassle. I chose to surrender to the reality of the situation. It is what it is. The reality is that the city's bureaucracy is bigger than I am. It would gobble up my time and energy. In the bigger picture of my life, this parking ticket was insignificant. *What do you want to do about it, if anything?* I decided to pay the fine, add to the city's treasury and to conclude this disagreeable situation. I accepted the fact that there was a probable injustice. The injustice however was not significant enough to me. I did not want to use my time and energy to alter that reality.

Reaching the Bottom-Line of Reality

You may be wondering what does a parking ticket and a saying from a contractor have to do with recovery from childhood abuse? From my way of thinking, the quicker I can arrive at the bottom-line of reality — my reality, the reality with which I must interact — the better off I am. The quantity and intensity of friction, pain, unhappiness, etc., that I experience in my life, seems to correlate directly with how quickly and firmly I respond to my realities.

For example, I could have spent hours complaining about the shoddy maintenance of signs by the city. I could have written letters of protest. I could have taken pictures of the street without posted signs as evidence. I could have ventured to the courthouse to sign up for court. I could have sat in court for several hours waiting for my turn for justice.

I also could have wished that my front steps were not sagging. The situation is what it is. If I had chosen another path to deal with the parking ticket then there would have been a considerable amount of stress, hassle, difficulty, frustration, etc.

An alternative point of view might state that fighting the ticket would have eased the anger, frustration and disappointment. This may be true for some people. Expending time and energy on fighting the ticket might be very helpful for some.

For me, I often find that surrendering to reality tends to ease, dissolve and place into perspective my feelings of anger, frustration and disappointment. Surrendering permits me to observe a different perspective. Surrendering places a particular situation into the fuller context of my life. Surrendering helps me to see, hear and feel more clearly, accurately and fully.

Dealing with the Reality of My Father, the Perpetrator

Last month I mentioned how I dealt with the reality of my father, the perpetrator in my family. The bottom-line was that my father was not going to change. I saw clearly how my father often acted in unacceptable ways, had many limitations, was narcissistic, and had an inclination to be crazy and inconsistent. I could have chosen to fight with my father until the day he died six years ago. I would have been right and just. He would have been wrong and guilty.

The reality was that my father was not going to change in any substantive way. My father was who he was. It is what it is. He was a limited and wounded human being who did many evil things to our family. He was also my father whom I loved and cared about. In many ways he was a Jekyll and Hyde character.

In my early days of recovery I spent a considerable amount of time fighting with my father. I insisted that he own up to the abuse he perpetrated. I demanded that he take responsibility for his past behavior. I confronted him when he minimized the impact of his abusive behavior

within our family. Needless to say, my father never completely owned up to the abuse nor took total responsibility. He also continued to minimize the abuse in many ways.

As I developed a different kind of relationship with my father however, adult to adult, my perception of my father began to change. He was no longer a powerful individual, but rather a sad, confused and tortured person. It was during that shift in my perception of my father that I stopped fighting with him. I began the process of surrendering to the reality of my father for who he was — a Jekyll and Hyde. He is what he is.

What am I Fighting?

Whether fighting with the reality of my father, fighting the reality of an unjust parking ticket or fighting the reality of replacing sagging stairs, the bottom-line question for me is - what am I fighting? I think that we often fight reality out of hurt, pain, betrayal, fear, confusion, anger, disappointment, etc.

We might fight reality because we feel bitter, hateful, revengeful, etc. We might fight the perpetrator or the parking ticket because we want something. We may want love, justice, correction, what was lost, etc. We might fight because we are stubborn, unyielding, rigid, etc. We might fight because we insist that reality be altered to fit our perception. We might fight because we do not like or do not want this particular reality.

I might fight because I do not want to surrender and accept that my father, the parking ticket, the sagging front stairs *is what it is*. When I do decide to fight, it is important that I acknowledge what I am fighting. It is equally important to me that I live a life of reflection so that I am aware that I am fighting. If I am disconnected in anyway from my reality, then I will probably be unaware that I am in the mode or stance of fighting.

When this happens I have not made a choice. I am not free. I have become a slave to blurred vision, blocked ears and a closed heart. Approaching life in a Don Quixote fashion is not helpful to me. The more I can see clearly, hear accurately and feel fully, the greater is the probability that I will perceive reality in its true and factual context. In turn, the greater is the probability that I will respond to reality in rapid, forthright and firm manner.

Surrendering to reality means being aware of and then acknowledging when a situation is bigger than I am. I may not like the reality, but e.g., trying to change my father is bigger than I am. I had no power, influence or ability to change my father.

Fighting Reality

I probably prolonged my fight with my father because I wanted and insisted that he change. He never changed in any substantive manner. Looking back on those days, it is obvious to me that my ego, my pride, was in the way of me seeing, hearing and feeling my father for who he was. From my understanding and experience, fighting reality is an ego-oriented stance toward life, i.e., I insist that my reality conform to what I want. When I invoke ego-oriented approaches to reality and life, I can easily become stuck, tripped up, overwhelmed, rigid, etc.

Instead of dealing with Jekyll and Hyde, I was dealing with someone and/or something else. I wanted my father to be something else, not who he was. My inability to see, hear and feel more comprehensively at that time, — (and there are a hundred and one reasons why), prolonged my early days of recovery.

I look back on that time and do not consider it a right or wrong, good or bad. In looking back I

now realize that I was not dealing with, not responding to the reality of which my father was — a Jekyll and Hyde who was stuck pathologically. I was dealing with and responding to my projected image, my desire of what I wanted my father to be for me. Over the years I have mourned the loss of the father that I wished I had. I have resolved this loss in my life to the extent that is acceptable to me.

I am not saying that we should never fight reality. There are many realities that need to be fought for example, human rights, oppression, equality, etc. What I am emphasizing here is that when we do decide to fight, it is important to see clearly what we are fighting. Otherwise we end up fighting the wrong reality. We waste much time, energy and resources.

Surrendering to Reality

Surrendering to reality is a spirit-oriented approach to life. By surrendering I understand and acknowledge that the reality with which I am interacting is bigger than I am. I gain a perspective of the bigger picture, the wider horizon in which this reality resides. When invoking a spirit-oriented approach to reality and life, it provides me with perspective, a variety of ways at looking at my situation. A spirit-oriented approach enables me to see, hear and feel my present reality within its larger holistic context.

When I began surrendering to the reality of which my father was, it was easier for me to be with him. I did not perceive him as all bad and evil. It was easier to be with him probably because I stopped trying to make him into a person that he could not possibly become. I learned how to respond to the endearing Jekyll aspects and how to deal with the hideous Hyde aspects of my father.

Accepting Reality

Accepting reality is more of a cognitive-oriented approach toward life. If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and sounds like a duck, it probably is a duck. *It is what it is.* When I invoke a cognitive-oriented approach to reality and life, it seems to reduce the level of emotional contamination that my feelings can too easily project onto the situation. As I surrendered increasingly to the reality of my father, I increased my acceptance of him as a person, as the Jekyll and Hyde person that he was, with all the good and evil, with all his frailties and craziness.

Feelings Do Not Alter Reality

It does not matter from a dealing-with-reality-perspective how I feel about the sagging stairs, about my father's craziness or about the parking ticket. My reality is never altered by how I feel.

How I deal with and respond to my reality might be influenced by my feelings. However, the reality is never changed by how I feel. I think that when I do fight with reality, my projected feelings can distort my perception of reality. The key question of what am I fighting becomes a powerful and clarifying question. In my earlier days of recovery I was fighting with my father for not taking responsibility for the abuse and for not being the father that I wanted him to be. My perception of who he was, became distorted. I was so discouraged and angry with my father for not being the father that I wanted, that I could not see clearly, hear accurately, feel fully who he was.

The Dilemma

A dilemma arises for many of us when we interact with perpetrators who are family or with family members in denial or who minimize the impact of the abuse. The dilemma revolves around the reality that they are our family. We have feelings about and toward them being our family. We have an emotional history with them. Our feelings toward them often blur and

confuse what we are fighting.

If I did not want anything from my family, from the perpetrator, then I would have left them cold turkey. But we usually want something from our families. This unfulfilled want tends to cause us to fight. This neglected want can add to the distortion of our perception of reality. In turn we often try to make people into figures that they are incapable of becoming. I tried to make my father into a person that he could not possibly become.

When we want something from people who have hurt us and/or continue to hurt us, it is difficult and complicated to break the ties. It confounds our grieving process. It becomes confusing to mourn the loss of a childhood of innocence, the loss of faithful parents, the loss of a steadfast family, the loss of healthy parents and a healthy family environment.

The dynamics of change echoes that in part if we want to change, to grow and to move-on, then we usually have to give up something, surrender something. In my life this means usually that I need to give up fighting.

Personal Summary

The bottom-line is that I choose and try to live a life style that cultivates and encourages me to see, hear and feel reality fully and comprehensively. I tend to deal with and respond to my reality through surrender. In turn, I believe that I have chosen a gentle and compassionate way to walk through life, a less stressful and clearer way of being.

Today, I prefer walking through my life surrendering to my realities as quickly and as much as possible. It is better for me to surrender than to fight. Besides, when I have tried in the past to fight reality, I never win. I only end up with bumps and bruises.

My experience suggests that many survivors will spend much time and energy fighting the reality of their family and family perpetrator(s). This may just be the hard reality of Stages One and Two, of Remembering and Mourning. When we are confused, hurt and angry we tend to fight. The irony for me however, is that fighting our reality does not bring us resolution and peace. It was only toward the end of my process that I surrendered to the reality of my father. It was at that moment that resolution and peace began to unfold for me.

Your feedback concerning the preceding article is encouraged and welcomed.



ASCA Meeting Ongoing Education Moment: ASCA News — Offering Feedback

Through the *ASCA News* we try to offer articles of substance. We try to provide articles that are thought provoking, that are worthy of your time and reflection. We try to delve into areas of recovery that are often uncomfortable, challenging and difficult to discuss. We attempt to offer our readers material that will be helpful in their ongoing process of recovery from childhood abuse. Offering feedback to THE MORRIS CENTER's Board and/or to George Bilotta can be helpful. Your feedback can be beneficial to making and honing the *ASCA News* so it can be increasingly more responsive to the needs and desires of our readership.

Here are some ideas concerning how to offer helpful feedback. The more specific you can be, usually the more helpful your comments will be.

1. Did you find anything in an article that was inaccurate, wrong and/or not factual?
2. Did you experience anything that was confusing, misleading, poorly stated?
3. Did you agree/disagree with a point of view expressed in any of the articles? With what do you agree/disagree? Why?
4. Did you find any article or part of an article particularly helpful or unhelpful? What was helpful? What was unhelpful?
5. Did you experience any particular feelings and/or thoughts that you would like to share?
6. In reading any of the articles, can you think of a way to make the ideas that were presented within any of the articles more readable? What are your thoughts?

You can offer feedback by sending an e-mail either to THE MORRIS CENTER's Board at tmc_asca@dnai.com or directly to George at georgebilotta@cs.com. Mailing addresses are included either in the beginning masthead or in the contact information at the conclusion of the newsletter. Your comments will be gratefully received.



Poetry

GRANDPA'S BED

*First they take away my bottle
Then they take away my blanket
Telling me the milkman wanted them
What does the milkman want with them?
They couldn't come up with something better than that?
Okay, so now there's nothing to hold on to
Now I cross the street without security
But I'd rather cross the street to my grandparents' house than sleep at my parents'
I have recurring nightmares
I dream of crabs with huge pinchers
Dancing on the window sill until growing too large to be friendly
Coming at me menacingly
While my mother watches from the hallway
At my grandparents' I dream of hairy scary monsters coming out of the closet at
night
While my grandfather watches from the hallway
I wake up screaming
My grandmother puts me in a flannel nightgown and tells me to switch beds with her
She'll sleep alone and I'll sleep with my grandfather*

*My grandfather's a lusty guy, hairy and scary
But the bed's warm and I don't have nightmares
I have to kick away my grandfather a lot.*

*He rubs up against me
It feels very strange and I don't understand
But it's better than getting hit at my parents'
And better than those nightmares
So I'll put up with it
My grandfather complains about the kicking in the morning
I stare at the second hand on the clock
Determined to watch time move on
Until it's time for breakfast
Grandma's specialty is flapjacks, raw in the middle with broken egg shells
But they're warm going down
And my mother doesn't cook anything
There's nothing warm about my mother
She's got a hard shell and big pinchers
I take a shower, get dressed
And cross the street again without security
And enter the house
And hold my breath
And hope for the best*

*And fear the worst
And ask when I can sleep over at my grandparents' again.*

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*If you would like to provide James Daniel's with feedback
about his poetry, e-mail James at: ribturtle@aol.com.*



Step Elaboration

We continue the monthly Step series by George J. Bilotta, Ph.D.

Step Elaboration augments the material provided within our *Survivor to Thriver* manual.

Step 18 (Continued)

I have resolved the abuse with my offenders

In last month's issue of the *ASCA News* I offered some of my reflections on Step 18. Through this article I will continue elaborating on Step 18 by focusing on the topic of forgiveness. In Step 18 on page 114 in our *Survivor to Thriver* manual it states:

This step presents the big issue of whether to forgive your parents/abusers. In a sense, resolving the abuse means coming to terms with what was done to you and accepting the feelings you have toward the people that did it. For some people this means forgiveness, but not necessarily for you...

Viewing Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a controversial issue within the recovery community. Our views on forgiveness are somewhat guided by where we are along the recovery continuum. Our thoughts on forgiveness are also guided by the definition we apply to forgiveness. A survivor just starting to feel and acknowledge the abuse is probably not in a space to consider the issue of forgiveness. In fact the survivor might even feel revolted by the thought of forgiving. Jumping into the arena of forgiveness would probably be unhelpful and a distraction from the primary work of Stage One Remembering. On the other hand, a survivor in Stage Three of Healing might perceive forgiveness rather differently. This does not mean however that just because one is moving toward the end of the recovery process one automatically forgives.

It seems that most survivors struggle eventually with the question of whether to forgive or not to forgive. Survivors come to an understanding for themselves whether forgiving or not forgiving is helpful or unhelpful for their ongoing recovery process and for the future of their lives. There are numerous reasons why some survivors choose to forgive and why some survivors choose not to forgive. The process of forgiving also seems to gather momentum toward the end of the process of recovery. Along the ongoing journey of recovery however, one may notice some impulses concerning whether to forgive or not to forgive. The decision to forgive or not to forgive is a process in and of itself.

Defining Forgiveness

Every individual has a particular definition or nuance on what forgiveness involves. When considering whether to forgive or not to forgive I think that it is helpful to be clear what our definition of forgiveness includes and does not include. I think that it is also helpful to ask the following questions.

1. If I chose to forgive or not to forgive, what will this mean for my life?
2. What will this mean for my relationship with the perpetrator, if I want a relationship with the perpetrator?
3. What will this mean for my relationship with my family?
4. From where does the impulse come to forgive or not to forgive?
5. What am I forgiving?

What Forgiveness Is Not

Through my own struggle with forgiving and through my experience accompanying others along the journey of recovery from childhood abuse, there seems to be agreement that forgiveness never includes excusing, minimizing, discounting, denying, condoning, letting slide,

letting off the hook, etc., the facts and behaviors of the abuse. Neither does forgiveness include the common adage $\frac{3}{4}$ forgive and forget. How could one forget the painful and damaging experiences of abuse? This common adage seems to have more to do with minimizing and denying than with forgiving.

Personal View of Forgiveness

There are many views on forgiveness. A book could fill easily the varying perspectives. Part of my perspective on forgiveness includes four aspects:

1. desiring to be in some type of relationship with the perpetrator
2. resolving hurt and anger
3. shifting power
4. clarifying what is being forgiven.

Desire for Relationship

First, I think part of the impulse to forgive springs from a desire on the part of the survivor to have a healthy relationship with the perpetrator. Most of the time this means a relationship with a parent, some other family member or friend of the family. My sense is that if we did not desire some enhancement of a healthy relationship with a father, mother, brother, sister, etc., who also happens to have been our perpetrator(s), that the issue of forgiveness would likely be moot.

Influence of Hurt and Anger on Forgiveness

Second, the capacity to forgive depends in part upon a survivor having resolved sufficiently the hurt and anger stemming from the abuse and the aftermath of the abuse. From my perspective the act of forgiving is a matter of the heart. We hold relationships within our heart. When our openness to these relationships were betrayed through the abuse, our hearts were broken. Hurt and anger tend to close-up and board-up the heart in an attempt to keep the heart protected.

If one wants to move toward forgiveness, one's heart needs to reopen. If one wants to move toward a healthy relationship with family members who were perpetrators or conspirators, then one's heart needs to reopen. One's heart does not open when experiencing hurt and anger. I think trying to forgive when we are experiencing hurt and anger is impossible. Forgiveness assumes that one has resolved sufficiently the hurt from and anger toward the perpetrator(s) and/or conspirators.

Shifting the Power

Third, I think that the act of forgiving involves a shifting of power. The act of forgiveness is not a onetime event. It is an unfolding organic process. I think it is helpful when a perpetrator, e.g., a father seeks forgiveness from the person(s) he abused, e.g., his child(ren). Usually this seeking would involve an acknowledgement that he did abuse. It would also involve a desire to make amends. In many ways this would often translate into becoming a cooperative participant in the survivor's recovery process. Unfortunately, this is more the exception than the rule.

I think that a significant shift in power occurs when a survivor feels powerful enough that h/she is able to be magnanimous. Magnanimity assumes significant power. The survivor feels that h/she has a potent power and gift to forgive or to withhold forgiveness. I think this power expressed as magnanimity wells up from a heart that has reopened, that has healed and that

has surrendered to the reality of the past abuse.

I think one becomes magnanimously powerful by:

1. cultivating eyes that see clearly the reality of the past and present,
2. cultivating ears that hear the story of the survivor as well as the story of the perpetrator,
3. cultivating a heart that embraces the Jekyll and Hyde personas of the perpetrator(s) and/or conspirators.

I also think that when a survivor has cultivated the power to forgive that a powerful way of proceeding through life, a powerful stance toward life unfolds. I sense that survivors who have the capacity to forgive feel free. This freedom is a little of what Step 19 alludes in stating that it releases me from the legacy of the past.

What to Forgive?

Fourth, the capacity to forgive becomes clarified through a process of deciding what to forgive. For me I have never forgiven my father for his destructive abusive behaviors. I have forgiven my father for being a wounded, crazy, inconsistent human being. I have forgiven my father for being a Jekyll and Hyde character. I have forgiven my father for being hurtful, betraying the family, for not being strong. I have forgiven my father for causing pain, distrust, emotional instability within our family, etc. But I have never forgiven my father for his destructive abusive evil behaviors. Instead I have forgiven my father for not being the father I wanted. I have forgiven my father for being pathological and narcissistic, for being a frail, broken, sad and limited human being.

I think not responding specifically to the questions of what to forgive and what not to forgive can confuse the topic of forgiveness. Survivors in various discussions focusing on the issue of forgiveness often clash without first articulating fully what they have chosen or not chosen to forgive. Clashing often occurs when discussing forgiveness when some survivors in the discussion are feeling hurt and angry. I think our hurt and anger will always override and overwhelm any consideration of forgiveness. In fact such a discussion will probably only infuriate a survivor who is in the initial stages of recovery or who experiences an ongoing hurt and anger toward the perpetrator(s), toward the conspirator(s).

I think that in any discussion concerning forgiveness it is essential and helpful to be clear concerning what one is forgiving and not forgiving. I also think that in the big picture of recovery through participation in ASCA, that listening to shares, taking-in what one can take-in at that time on the topic of forgiveness is helpful in the long run. If an ASCA meeting waited until everyone in attendance was ready and comfortable to move-on to another Step or part of a Step, a meeting, a person would rarely move-on. With each approach to another Step, we become uncomfortable because we are challenging our personal status quo, our personal equilibrium. Besides I also believe that we are always in all of the Stages and Steps. We are just focusing on a particular Step or aspect of a Step at any given moment.

Summary

Step 18, I have resolved the abuse with my offenders to the extent that is acceptable to me, may or may not include the act of forgiveness. However, from my point of view, I cannot conceive of how a survivor could move-on to Step 19, I hold my own meaning about the abuse that releases me from the legacy of the past, to the Step of freedom, without resolving the issue of forgiveness one way or another. A personal reflection on forgiveness cannot be sidestepped. I do not think that the question of whether to forgive or not to forgive, and what to forgive and not forgive can be ignored.

Recovery from child abuse ultimately demands a response one way or another concerning the issue of forgiveness. Why? Hurt calls for resolution. The human phenomenon of forgiveness weaves intimately throughout the heart, the core and the very sinew of what it means to be a human being. Recovery from childhood abuse in part is about resolution and becoming a fuller human being.

Your feedback concerning the preceding article is encouraged and welcomed.



Announcements

Any updates for current Co-Secretaries of ASCA meetings are included in this section of the *ASCA News*. Currently, we forward a hardcopy or a file of the *ASCA News* to all the meetings. A Co-Secretary or some designated person from the meeting should be duplicating and distributing the *ASCA News* to the meeting membership.

1. How to order the *Survivor to Thrive* manual? First, the manual can be downloaded from our web site for free. Second, to purchase a copy of the manual send a check or money order payable to "The Morris Center" for \$24.00 (add \$5.00 for orders outside of US, i.e., \$29.00) and mail to George Bilotta, *Survivor to Thrive*, 173 Malden Street, West Boylston, MA 01583-1020, U.S.A. Manuals are sent priority mail usually within a few days.
2. If you have **editing skills and want to volunteer** to assist with preparing the *ASCA News* for publication, please contact George Bilotta for details.
3. If there are **changes in Co-Secretary** assignments, please let us know so we can forward a hard copy or e-mail a file of the *ASCA News* to the correct person. Also if Co-Secretaries have a change in address, telephone number or e-mail, please send these change to: e-mail: GeorgeBilotta@cs.com, telephone: 508.835.6054, mailing address: 173 Malden Street, West Boylston, MA 01583-1020.
4. If your meeting is not receiving the *ASCA News* at the beginning of every month contact George Bilotta.
5. Remember that if you want to submit an article for the July issue of the *ASCA News*, our **deadline is June 11th**.



Observations, Questions, Comments!

If you have any observations, questions and/or comments that you want to share concerning ASCA and THE MORRIS CENTER, George Bilotta, welcomes your inquiries, phone: 508.835.6054, e-mail: georgebilotta@cs.com. If you would like to contribute a poem, story, article, etc. to our **ASCA News** please contact us.