

ASCA News • August 2000

P.O. Box 477

San Francisco, CA 94114

web: <http://www.ascasupport.org>



From the Desk of George Bilotta

For many the lazy hazy crazy days of summer suggest an opportunity to sit back, relax and enjoy the warmth and bounty that Mother Nature bestows upon us during this sun drenching season of the year. But for the ASCA News we would like to use the month of August as a period of examination. We want to know what you think and feel about the ASCA News. It would be helpful if you would take a few moments and give us some feedback concerning the following questions.

On a scale of **1 not helpful** -- **5 very helpful** how would you rate the following.

0. ____ The helpfulness of the ASCA News to your ongoing recovery efforts?
- a. ____ The helpfulness of this year's "Reflective Moment" series?
- b. ____ The helpfulness of the monthly "Rotation C ASCA Meeting Topic" write-ups?
- c. ____ The helpfulness of the monthly "ASCA Meeting Education Moment" series?
- d. What do you find **most helpful** and **least helpful** about the ASCA News?
- e. Do you have any suggests concerning how the monthly ASCA News could be of better service to you and/or do you have any overall comments concerning the ASCA News?

You can reply to the above survey by

- pasting the above questionnaire into an e-mail and forwarding to: georgebilotta@cs.com
- mailing a reply directly to George Bilotta at -- 173 Malden St, West Boylston, MA 01583
- or your ASCA meeting might provide everyone with a little time to complete the survey with the Co-Secretaries forwarding the meeting's responses on to George.

We appreciate your efforts in providing us with some feedback. Any feedback will be helpful in aiding our evaluation of the ASCA News. Ultimately the ASCA News is meant to serve you. So let us know what you think.

The following brief article is a continuation of our monthly series focused on pondering some of life's basic questions.



A Reflective Moment

Life's Integrity

by George Bilotta

Life's integrity resonates with a steadfast adherence to principles for life that we have thoughtfully explored and that we purposefully try to integrate into our daily lives. These principles for life are like compasses and maps that assist us as we proceed through life's daily activities and experiences. When we feel confused and lost, they help to clarify and redirect. When we feel overwhelmed and challenged, they help us to pause and regain our composure. When we feel hurt and wounded, they are like soothing salves and restoratives.

With principles for life that take on qualities of soundness, wholeness and completeness we go forth down the path of integrity. Each of us assumes full responsibility for the integrity of our lives. Commissioned by life we seek to uncover and to think through sound principles for living life that will offer guidance during the usual difficulties, hassles and stresses of daily living. Irrespective of what has happened to us in our childhood past or in our recent past, life calls each of us to fully account for the integrity of who we are and for how we go about living our daily lives.

A life overflowing in integrity does not mean that we always have the right answer, that we always do the correct thing, that we always feel confident that we are proceeding in the right direction. Rather a life of integrity suggests that we have consciously and thoughtfully, purposefully and wholeheartedly embraced specific life principles that function as our guides. If we have not been reflective about selecting our principles for life, then we probably have unreflectively adopted and haphazardly picked up many principles for life that may or may not be helpful.

These adopted principle for life may have belonged to our families, to society, to religions, to philosophies of the world, to educational ideas that may not reflect our uniqueness nor how we strive to be as human beings. We all possess principles for life out of which we function. Some may be born out of reflection and some picked up because they look nice or fill a void. No one is immuned from the influences that surround us and whose air we constantly breath. If we desire to live life through integrity, it seems that we must first be reflective and thoughtful about the principles by which we want to guide our daily lives.

What seems most important is that our basic principles be thoughtfully and specifically chosen by each of us. Integrity assumes that we solidly stand on our own principles. Integrity assumes that we have not taken the easy way, the unreflective way that results in standing on principles that have been assembled by others or through cultural indoctrination. When we assemble our own principles we know and we feel confident that they will not cave-in while dealing with life's usual difficulties, hassles and stresses.

How do we judge that a principle for life is helpful or unhelpful for our lives? At their core, principles for life usually result in nurturing and enhancing life, in opening the heart and lifting the spirit, in forming us into better human beings. They usually encourage flexibility, increased listening, and promote awareness and sensitivity to

the people, events and things around us.

Questions to ponder.

What are your basic principles for life?

How did you uncover and think through these principles?

What are some of the principles that you have haphazardly adopted from others?

How do you benefit from the core principles for your life?



Rotation C Topic:

Possible ASCA Meeting Topic for August

Maintaining a Relationship with a Past Perpetrator?

One of the more heart wrenching considerations for adult survivors concerns whether to or how to maintain a relationship with a past perpetrator(s). For most people this process reveals an horrendous array of potholes. Most often our perpetrator(s) were family members, and more often than not a parent or a foster/stepparent. As an adult and irrespective of the type of relationship we may have maintained in the past, our choice to expand or limit our relationship with a past abuser remains fluid. Nothing is ever in cement. We always have a choice, though often perplexing, difficult and painful.

Each of us makes a variety of ongoing decisions based on our particular circumstances and desires. It may be helpful to have a healthy degree of suspicion of people and books that focus on one size fits all answers to this complex question. An ongoing dialogue within ourselves might be helpful in exploring some of the following questions.

Perhaps the first questions to struggle with examine what do we mean by a relationship? A relationship might simply mean a civil polite acknowledgment of the perpetrator, for example while attending a family gathering. On the other hand, a relationship might involve investing part of our heart.

A second set of questions might explore what kind of relationship do I want? What is my realistic assessment of the perpetrator's ability to engage with me in the type of relationship that I want? What are the parameters of the relationship, i.e., what am I willing and not willing to do to foster the relationship that I want? Given my present knowledge, what seems a likely and realistic scenario of a relationship unfolding?

A third set of questions might include whether I might be blind, or that I might be setting myself up for disappointment and frustration? What is the risk/reward equation to this relationship? Am I looking to regain something that I lost as a child in this relationship? If so, as an adult what are the possibilities of regaining this aspect of the relationship or has time simply erased its possibility?

Thinking about maintaining a relationship with a past perpetrator raises a wide variety of questions and feelings. Perhaps the bottom-line for many of us points to the simple question - is maintaining a relationship with a past perpetrator at this

time in my life a healthy or unhealthy endeavor?



ASCA Meeting Ongoing Education Moment: Supporting Your ASCA Meeting

Your ASCA meeting could use your ongoing support in several basic ways. An ASCA meeting just does not happen but rather relies on the good will of its participants. We support by observing the meeting guidelines and backing up the Co-Secretaries. In a community based meeting participants support their meeting through their willingness to take a turn at functioning as a Co-Secretary. Also supporting the meeting includes giving a reasonable donation to help with the ongoing expenses of a community based meeting. Provider based meetings charge a fee between ten and twenty dollars which covers meeting expenses including payment to the provider who organizes the meeting and is usually the Secretary or Co-Secretary of the meeting.

Another important way of supporting your meeting includes spreading the word. You might have the best support group meeting in the world, but if others do not become aware of the meeting a productive meeting can soon die off. In addition, if you have the time and energy, you might consider helping one of the new Board members by joining a committee. The Morris Center and ASCA is primarily a volunteer oriented organization. Without interested and enthused people coming forward and donating their time, energy and talents, our organization would soon fold.

The meeting might take a little time each week to discuss the various needs of the meeting and how members can creatively and concretely support the ongoing success of their meeting. Without you there is no meeting.



New Board of Directors THE MORRIS CENTER for healing from child abuse

Officers:

President, Margaret Jayko
Secretary, A Renee Koren
Treasurer, Richard Scott

Directors:

Lane Arye, Process Facilitator
R.J. Valado Bradbury, Survivor to Thriver Maintenance, Companion Manual
Jessy Keiser, ASCA Program Development, Board Development
Amaroq de Quebrazas, Community Outreach
David Vandevent, ASCA Co-Secretary Training & Coaching

Bob Roberts, Web Master
Diane Whitney, ASCA News

Future Board Positions To Be Filled:
Workshop & Conference Coordination
Public Relations
Board Membership
Membership Development
Grant Investigation
Grant Writing
Donation Solicitation

If you have a special skill and desire to join the Board let us know.



Co-Secretary Update

Any updates for current Co-Secretaries of ASCA meetings are included in this section of the ASCA NEWS. In addition, Co-Secretaries or some designated person from the meeting should be downloading the ASCA NEWS. It is then duplicated and distributed to the meeting membership.

1. It would be helpful if Co-Secretaries would encourage members to forward the ASCA News survey onto to George Bilotta. You might consider having the membership complete the survey before, during or after a meeting. Be creative. What would be most helpful is to receive some feedback concerning the ASCA News from the meeting membership. Thanks.
2. If you want to make your meeting's quarterly payment for the ASCA telephone voice mail \$15, and the meeting's web page listing \$10, make your check payable to "The Morris Center" and mail to -- The Morris Center, c/o George Bilotta, 173 Malden Street, West Boylston, MA 01583.
3. Presently, if you want to order the Survivor to Thriver manual simply forward a check for \$23 payable to "The Morris Center" and forward to -- The Morris Center, c/o George Bilotta, 173 Malden Street, West Boylston, MA 01583.
4. If you would like to contribute a poem, story, article, etc. to our ASCA News please contact us.
5. If you have a question or a situation that needs discussion, you can always reach George Bilotta, by e-mailing him directly at georgebilotta@cs.com or telephoning him directly in Massachusetts 508.835.6054. Never hesitate to e-mail or call.



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.