

ASCA News • May 2000

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From the Desk of Executive Director

George Bilotta

We have had a stalled Spring this season in New England. With an unseasonably cool April, the flowers and trees seem to be delaying their unfolding. At times there seems to be a similarity with our lives and this delay to Spring. So many things can cool, delay, hamper, impede, suspend our recovery from childhood abuse and thus the unfolding of the kinds of lives that we desire to be living. Hopefully, this May's issue of the ASCA News will provide you with some inspiration, challenge and concrete direction.

If you are looking for a little more support for your recovery, our ASCA e-Meeting located on our web site: www.ascasupport.org might be helpful. We started our ASCA e-Meeting in November 1999 and it seems to be evolving well. There are past meetings with shares and feedback that are available to review. Many shares like standard ASCA meetings are inspiring and tackle many of the same difficult issues that we all seem to be facing. If you have not taken the opportunity to participate in our ASCA e-Meetings you might give it a try. It just might be that little something extra for your recovery.

Besides our ASCA e-Meetings, past and present, there is a wealth of information on our web site. You can access our Survivor to Thriver manual, even download part or all of the manual. You can review past issues of the ASCA News, and access the ASCA meeting Format and Support Materials. We have a great Resource section which not only connects you to other major US organizations, but contains a discussion on finding local resources for ongoing recovery.

With the inauguration of our new Board of Directors, this may be the occasion to think about helping out by volunteering. Various Board members will be chairing work committees and will be looking for people to join. We will keep you up-to-date with volunteer opportunities beginning with July's issue of the ASCA News as Board members start their committees.

During the past several months through the monthly articles under A Reflective Moment, I have been encouraging us to use this first year of the new millennium as a reflective period. Through this reflective process we have the potential to enhance the meaning of our daily lives, to adjust and to nuance what we want our lives to be all about. I believe we do this first by pausing and thinking about fundamental and grounding questions concerning our lives. This month I suggest that we reflect on the values by which we live.

If I can ever be of assistance to you, please e-mail me at tmc_asca@dnai.com or telephone me at 508.835.6054.

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



A Reflective Moment **The Values by Which We Live**

by George Bilotta

We often say that we value this, that we value that. A value possesses a particular importance or usefulness for our lives. For example, we may say that we value education, relationships, free time, money, cultivating a loving family environment, or that we value personal characteristics such as integrity, honesty, compassion, kindness, etc. Though as a society we may share many similar values like freedom, democracy, caring for those incapable of taking care of themselves due to sickness, old age, etc., each of us holds special particular values that are unique to our core self, that shape our everyday lives, that define who we are.

What we value has a formative influence, i.e., it points us in a specific direction in our lives. Values are like a compass, they help us to find our way, especially when life becomes confusing, overwhelming, hectic, disorienting, etc. If we are unaware of our specific values, the values that form us, that direct our lives, then our values may be more like a compass that has been forgotten at home while we are on a hiking trip. In this manner, our values like a forgotten compass are not helpful when we need them, since we are unaware of what they are. We have forgotten them and how they operate in our lives.

If we are unaware of our core values, then they will not provide us with direction, with comfort or encouragement during stormy and stressful periods. They will not be available to help us to rebalance our lives, to regain focus and perspective, to interpret and to give meaning to our lives. Upon reflection we might determine that we may want to cultivate additional values. Though we may have inherited a variety of values from our family, society, friends and organizations with which we were raised, we always have the choice of cultivating additional values that may be more suitable and helpful for our lives today.

Questions:

1. What are your six primary or core values?
2. How did these particular values become central to your life?
3. Why do they continue to be core to who you are today?
4. Are there other values that you would like to cultivate in your life?
5. How might you go about cultivating them?



ASCA Meeting Ongoing Education Moment: **Money & Donations**

Many people feel awkward and uncomfortable discussing money and finances. These feelings and others can derive from various experiences with money. We may feel somewhat ignorant or inexperienced around money matters. We might have had negative experiences with money, or we do

not have sufficient resources for our personal needs and wants. We may have felt used around money, etc. Some view money as power, as a way to manipulate, as a necessary evil, etc. And some people simply prefer not to think and talk about money. In reference to paying for services that assist in our recovery from childhood abuse, many of us feel resentful that we need to pay out of our own pocket for various services to recover from the abuse that was inflicted upon us, that was no fault of our own. We feel resentful that insurance does not cover much of our recovery needs and our perpetrators seldom make amends.

In the *community based* ASCA meetings, the basket is passed around at every meeting for donations. These donations are used to pay the rent, to help pay the ASCA telephone information line, to list the meeting on the web site, and for meeting incidentals like printing, etc. In provider based meetings however, participants pay a set fee to the provider of the meeting. The fee covers the meeting expenses and pays for the provider's time in organizing and facilitating the provider based ASCA meeting.

It is probably healthy and helpful for community based ASCA meetings to hold a business meeting on a quarterly basis to address meeting finances through an open discussion. Co-Secretaries do not bear the burden of meeting finances. This is the responsibility of every member. Everyone should be aware of the expenses that the meeting incurs and how much needs to be collected on a weekly basis in order to maintain a financially healthy meeting. Are there any particular money concerns that your meeting needs to address?



Rotation C Topic: Possible ASCA Meeting Topic for May Money & Finances

Many survivors of childhood abuse as well as people in general have mixed and confusing feelings concerning the matters of money and finances. One of the projects of adulthood is to take care of ourselves financially, usually through employment or through shared family responsibilities as in the case of a parent who attends to the domestic chores though does not earn an income. Often survivors sense that they have been held back from educational opportunities, career possibilities and sometimes just the basic ability to maintain steady employment due to their childhood abuse.

During our childhood and teen years, we may have been plagued with depression, anxiety, PTSD post traumatic stress disorder, ADD attention deficit disorder, and learning disabilities which hindered our ability to attend to school work. During teen years we may have felt inadequate, not good enough. We may have lacked self-esteem and thus the ability and confidence to experiment with the world around us. If grammar and high school did not go well, we probably did not pursue college or a trade. To mask our pain, we may have used drugs or alcohol to numb the pain and memories. We may have tended to drift, not being able to focus, to set life's priorities, to have a vision for our lives or a dream to pursue.

Dealing with money and financial matters can be overwhelming and uncomfortable. In our efforts to come to grips with any unresolved concerns around money and finances the following questions might be helpful to think about.

Questions:

1. What are my basic attitudes and feelings concerning money?
 2. While growing up, what did I learn about money?
 3. How do I use money today?
 4. How does having money, or not having money influence my daily life?
 5. What unhealthy and unhelpful habits do I have about money? What is their source?
 6. What are two or three actions that I need to take in reference to money matters in my life?
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Poetry

The Secret Loss

by Leland Pitts, first published in Transfer 1994.

I.

For my family,
there should've been five funerals.
In separate seconds we approached
ourselves: three car crashes,
one near drowning.
I prepare by gathering petals
and cones, tiny burs, ladybugs.
I approach a house in a drained
field, windows opaque, wood
floors taut and shrunk, haunted
with brittle newspapers.

I wait.
Time backlogs. Cold seeps through weeds.
And the counting begins:
three four five
Drapes begin dancing, smells harvested green
and dusty, the moon purges
the house with its devastating angle.
I write messages
on walls: Give us a sign.
In the window,
a world is framed.

II.

On Sunday my niece and I visit the ocean.
This is dolphin country, she says.
Fogged, bottle caps and plastic,
invaded. *ten eleven twelve*
Air tingles. My niece nearly without

a father. Waves chase each other, come close
to overcoming. All the beautiful almosts.

twenty-one twenty-two

Perhaps the spirit lives outside
the body, translucent. Perhaps it swims
in a dream, deep among sea ferns
and anemones, skin taut
and mercurial. Five dolphins emerge,
seek a new place.

I name each one after members of my family.

They hold their breath.

twenty-six twenty-seven

They drown everyday.



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. The Co-Secretary Training on Saturday, May 6th, has been canceled due to insufficient need and interest.

If you have a question or a situation that needs discussion, you can always reach George Bilotta, by e-mailing him or telephoning him directly in Massachusetts 508.835.6054. Never hesitate to e-mail or call.



Announcement!

Survivorship and Bay Area Women Against Rape present: *Honoring Your Story --- Easing Your Journey.*

A full-day conference for survivors of ritual abuse, sadistic sexual abuse, mind control and torture, pro-survivors, partners, friends and family members traveling beside them on the healing path.

Saturday, May 6, 2000, Preservation Park ~ Oakland, California

For detailed information and registration contact: Survivorship, PMB 139, 3181 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94110-4515

e-mail: info@survivorship.org

web site: <http://www.survivorship.org>



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.