

PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

Miranda summons her inner parent

MIRANDA took a long walk one afternoon through the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve, at the bottom of Embarcadero Road.

The landscape was beautiful, winding through Bay inlets and waterways, and among the reeds and bird sanctuary.

She thought about her membership in ACA, and how that had changed her life. For the past 20 years, living and working in New York, Miranda had attended meetings of Adult Children of Alcoholics. That experience had made life different for her and much better.

Both Miranda's parents were alcoholics. Her father had been the senior officer in a Palo Alto bank, who drank too much and became resentful at hitting the ceiling of a career in which he thought he deserved so much more.

So he retired early and drank himself to death.

This is part 41 of a 48-part fictionalized serial appearing in the Daily Post, written by John Angell Grant with illustrations by Steve Curl.

With a brain tumor and lung cancer, he refused help from the medical community. I don't need anyone, was his motto, I can do this myself.

Miranda's mother, a life-long smoker, lived a few more years, and died of emphysema. She rolled an oxygen tank around with her, and complained about what a raw deal life had given her.

Through the ACA 12 Step program, Miranda came to understand that she had grown up without a safe and supportive loving parent in her life.

Instead she grew up in fear, in a home filled with chaos.

She came to understand that the

decisions she made as an adult were an irrational response to the feeling of catastrophe and abandonment that she experienced as a child.

She also learned, amazingly, through the program, that she could "re-parent" herself — in other words, find a "loving inner parent" within



MIRANDA

the depths of her own psyche; bring this loving parent to life in her pro-active imagination; and then initiate a dialogue between that loving parent and the frightened child inside her who was at the root of the bad decisions she had made at times in her life.

The whole thing sounded bizarre when first suggested; but the process had changed her life.

One of the most amazing parts of Miranda's protocol was dominant and non-dominant handwriting.

Here she allowed the loving inner parent to write on paper with Miranda's dominant right hand; and the inner child to respond or initiate dialogue with Miranda's non-dominant left hand.

The results blew Miranda away.

It was like two different people inhabited her psyche, speaking in their own voices, while she was some kind of mere transcriber of the dialogue.

Working with her sponsor, and these dialogues, Miranda reached a point where the internal re-parenting process allowed her inner child to feel safe and secure, and become happy and free. When this happened, the adult Miranda made better and happier decisions; and formed better and happier relationships.

For this she was profoundly grateful.

More on Monday.