

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS AMONG Adult Children of Alcoholics

We become isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.

We become approval seekers and lost our identity in the process.

We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.

We either become alcoholics, marry them, or both, or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfill our sick abandonment needs.

We live life from the viewpoint of victims and are attracted by that weakness in our love and friendship relations.

We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and it is easier for us to be concerned with others rather ourselves. This enables us not to look too closely at our faults.

We get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.

We become addicted to excitement.

We confuse love and pity and tend to "love" people we can "pity" and "rescue".

We have stuffed our feelings from our traumatic childhoods and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts so much.

We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem.

We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment and will do anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to experience painful abandonment feelings which we received from living with sick people who were never there emotionally for us.

Alcoholism is a family problem and we became para-alcoholics and took on the characteristics of an alcoholic even though we may or may not pick up the drink.

Para-alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.

Eight Recovery Principles

Matthew 5:1-13 The Beatitudes

Realize I'm not God; I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable. *Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor.*

Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to him, and that he has the power to help me recover. *Happy are those who mourn. God will comfort them.*

Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control. *Happy are the humble.*

Openly examine and confess my faults to God, to myself, to God, and to someone I trust. *Happy are the pure in heart.*

Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects. *Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires.*

Evaluate all my relationships; Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others except when to do so would harm them or others. *Happy are the merciful. Happy are the peacemakers.*

Reserve a daily time with God for self examination, Bible readings and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.

Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and by my words. *Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires.*

GARDEN RIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

102 N Garden Ridge
Lewisville, Texas 75067

Phone: (972) 221-3561

Email: pnichols@gardenridge.org

Contact Philip Nichols

GARDEN RIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Adult Children of Alcoholics

Find Healing From Life's Hurts,
Habits, and Hang-Ups



Phone (972) 221-3561

The Problem

Many of us found that we had several characteristics in common as a result of being brought up in an alcoholic household. We had come to feel isolated, uneasy with other people, and especially authority figures. To protect ourselves, we became people pleasers, even though we lost our own identities in the process. All the same, we would mistake any personal criticism as a threat.

We either became alcoholics ourselves or married them or both. Failing that, we found another compulsive personality, such as a workaholic, to fulfill our sick need for abandonment.

We lived life from the standpoint of victims. Having an over-developed sense of responsibility, we preferred to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. We somehow got guilt feelings when we stood up for ourselves rather than giving in to others. Thus, we became reactors, rather than actors, letting others take the initiative.

We were dependent personalities --terrified of abandonment--willing to do almost anything to hold onto a relationship in order not to be abandoned emotionally. Yet we kept choosing insecure relationships because they matched our childhood relationship with alcoholic parents.

These symptoms of the family problem of alcoholism made us "co-victims"--those who take on the characteristics of the problem without necessarily ever taking a drink. We learned to keep our feelings down as children and kept them buried as adults. As a result of this conditioning, we confused love with pity, tending to love those we could rescue. Even more self defeating, we became addicted to excitement in all our affairs, preferring constant upset to workable relationships.

This is a description, not an indictment.

THE SOLUTION

The Solution is to become your own loving parent.

As ACA becomes a safe place for you, you will find the freedom to express all the hurts and fears you have kept inside and to free yourself from the shame and blame that are carryovers from the past. You will become an adult who is imprisoned no longer by childhood reactions. You will recover the child within you, learning to accept and love yourself.

The healing begins when we risk moving out of isolation. Feelings and buried memories will return. By gradually releasing the burden of unexpressed grief, we slowly move out of the past. We learn to re-parent ourselves with gentleness, humor, love and respect.

This process allows us to see our biological parents as the instruments of our existence. Our actual parent is the Higher Power, Jesus Christ. Although we had alcoholic parents, our Higher Power gave us the 8 Principles of Recovery.

This is the action and work that heals us: we use the Steps, we use the meetings and we use the telephone. We share our experience, strength and hope with each other. We learn to restructure our sick thinking one day at a time. When we release our parents from responsibility for our actions today, we become free to make healthful decisions as actors, not reactors. We progress from hurting to healing to helping. We awaken to a sense of wholeness we never knew was possible.

By attending these meetings on a regular basis, you will come to see parental alcoholism for what it is and how it affected you as a child, and continues to affect you as an adult. You will learn to keep the focus on yourself in the here and now. You will take responsibility for your own life and supply your own parenting.

You will not do this alone. Look around you and you will see others who know how you feel. We will love and encourage you no matter what. We ask you to

accept us just as we accept you.

This is a spiritual program based on action coming from love. We are sure that as the love grows inside you, you will see beautiful changes in all your relationships, especially with God, yourself and your parents.

Celebrate Recovery meetings are open to everyone. Come and join us in a time of worship, amazing stories of transformed lives, and small group discussions designed to provide the strength to overcome life's hurts, habits, and hang-ups.

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