

ADULT CHILDREN OF FAMILY DYSFUNCTION

Do you feel isolated, uneasy with other people, especially authority figures? Are you a people pleaser, even though, to protect yourself, you lose your own identity in the process?

We have become 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.

The Problem

- Guess what is normal.
- Have difficulty following a project through to completion.
- Lie, when it would be just as easy to tell the truth.
- Judge themselves without mercy.
- Have difficulty having fun.
- Take themselves very seriously.
- Have difficulty with relationships.
- Overreact to changes over which they have no control.
- Constantly seek approval and affirmation.
- Either super responsible or super irresponsible.
- Extremely loyal even when the loyalty is undeserved.
- Look for immediate rather than deferred gratification.
- Lock themselves into a course of action; no serious consideration for alternate behaviors or possible consequences.
- Seek tension and crisis, and then complain about the results.
- Avoid conflict or aggravate it; rarely do they deal with it.
- Fear rejection and abandonment, yet are rejecting of others.
- Fear failure but sabotage their success.
- Fear criticism and judgment, yet criticize and judge others.
- Manage time poorly and do not set priorities in a way that works effectively for them.

The Solution

The solution is to become your own loving parent.

- Find the freedom to express all the hurts and fears kept inside and gain freedom from the shame and blame carried over from the past.
- Become an adult who is no longer imprisoned by childhood reactions.
Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt you and make amends for harm you've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.
- Recover the child within you, learning to accept and love yourself.
- Move out of self-imposed isolation.
- Rediscover feelings and buried memories.
- Gradually release the burden of unexpressed grief; slowly move out of the past.
- Learn to re-parent ourselves with gentleness, humor, love, and respect.
- Learn to see our biological parents as the instruments of our existence.
- Trust that your actual parent is the Higher Power, Jesus Christ. Although we had alcoholic parents, our Higher Power gave us the 8 Recovery Principles.
- Receive experience, strength, and hope from others.
- Restructure unhealthy thinking one day at a time.
- Release our parents from the responsibility for our actions today.
- Become free to make healthy decisions, allowing us to act, not react.
- Progress from hurting, to healing, to helping.
- Awaken to a sense of wholeness we never knew was possible.
- Come to see parental alcoholism for what it is. Know how that affected you as a child and continues to affect you as an adult.
- Learn to keep the focus on yourself in the here and now.
- Take responsibility for your own life and supply your own parenting.
- See beautiful changes in all your relationships, especially with God, yourself, and your parents.

To change, adult children of family dysfunction/ACFD cannot use history as an excuse for continuing their behaviors. They learn to have no regrets for what might have been, because their experiences have shaped their talents as well as their defects of character. It is their responsibility to discover their talents, to build their self-esteem, and to repair any damage done. They will allow themselves to feel their feelings, to accept them, and learn to express them appropriately. When they have begun those tasks, they will try to let go of their past and get on with the business of their life.