Adult Children of Alcoholics

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, eve 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 overdeveloped sense of responsibility, we preferred to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. We somehow felt guilty 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 relationships with alcoholic parents.

These symptoms of the family disease of alcoholism made us "co-victims"—those who take on the characteristics of the disease 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

As this group becomes a safe place, you will find the freedom to express all the hurts and fears you have kept inside. The shame and blame that are carryovers from the past will begin to fade. You will become an adult who is imprisoned no longer by childhood reactions.

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.

This process allows us to see our biological parents as the instruments of our existence. Our actual parent is our Higher Power, Jesus Christ. Although we had alcoholic parents, our Higher Power gave us the 8 Biblical Principles and the 12 Steps of Recovery. These biblical steps work if you work them, but won't if you don't.

This is the action and work that heals us. We use the steps, we use the meetings, 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 healthy 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: a disease that infected 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 seek God's will for your life and not your own will.

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

Our Higher Power, Jesus Christ, can and will heal you if you are willing to allow Him to. No matter how damaged or lost you may feel, you can heal!