

Seekers

- A. A Christ centered program.

- B. We give information on the physical, mental, and emotional effects of your separation from God.
 - 1. We show films
 - 2. We provide reading materials
 - 3. We give lectures

- C. We educate people in:
 - 1. Communication
 - 2. Problem solving
 - 3. Self-esteem
 - 4. The results of addictive behavior and co-dependency

- D. We use the Bible as our foundation for truth in recovery.

- E. Group discussion, which allows people to share with each other and find answers that will work for them.

RULES AND EXPECTATIONS OF GROUP CONDUCT

We deal with our separation from God. We talk about alcoholism, drug addiction, co-dependency, hurts, hang-ups and habits and other dysfunctions, and our feelings about them.

We discover our defenses that block us from getting in touch with our feelings.

We are honest and use; Leveling, Risking, Blindsiding, Confronting, etc. (See Pages 55 & 56)

Feelings are not right or wrong, good or bad, of themselves. These are judgment words – they don't describe the actual feeling. (See Page 58)

Please respect the right of others to have your undivided attention. Do not: go for coffee, use the restroom, change positions in group or crosstalk.

Use language that is appropriate for sobriety.

Confidentiality is respected. What is said in group stays in group.

The use of mind altering substances is not allowed. Anyone under the influence will be asked to leave immediately.

You are encouraged to:

- 1) Stick to what's going on in the here and now.
- 2) Speak for yourself. (Make "I" statements instead of saying "You").
- 3) Decide what you want for yourself.
- 4) Consider what the group members say as their observation of you. Any confrontations or accusations are made in love.
- 5) Accept positive strokes for your good works, but as a way of supporting your O.K. position.
- 6) What goes on in group is personal and private. Do not discuss confidential matters outside of group.

Recommended Scriptures for Study and Memorization

(Read like a story)

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Gal 5:17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Romans 7:17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

Romans 7:18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

Gal 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God

Eph 2:9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Romans 6:19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

1 Peter 2:5 You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

2nd Corinthians 10:2 I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Eph 4:23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

1 Corinthians 6:20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Romans 6:13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Be joyful always;

1 Thessalonians 5:17 pray continually;

1 Thessalonians 5:18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

THINGS WE NEED TO DO

We admitted we were powerless over the effects of our separation from God.

Romans 7:18

"I KNOW THAT NOTHING GOOD LIVES IN ME, THAT IS, IN MY SINFUL NATURE. FOR I HAVE THE DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS GOOD, BUT I CANNOT CARRY IT OUT."

We admitted that our lives had become unmanageable.

Psalms 6:6-7

"I AM WORN OUT FROM GROANING; ALL NIGHT LONG I FLOOD MY BED WITH WEEPING AND DRENCH MY COUCH WITH TEARS. MY EYES GROW WEAK WITH SORROW; THEY FAIL BECAUSE OF ALL MY FOES."

When we fall away from the plan God has for us, our despair, chaos and disorder can cause us to feel physically sick and may result in serious illness.

Additional scriptures to look up:

Deuteronomy 30:19-20

Luke 15:17

1st Corinthians 8:2

2nd Corinthians 12:9-10

Mark 4:35-41 (Lack of trust and fear of the unknown contributes to our feelings of powerlessness.)

Proverbs 12:8-23 (Realizing that we have non-productive Behaviors which can damage our health helps us to understand why and how our lives became unmanageable.)

Proverbs 28:26 (We cannot rely on our will alone, we must Also rely on the strength of God working through us.)

EXPLANATION

(Galatians 5:19-21)

I admit I have a problem.

A. I am powerless over this problem.

Romans 7:7-18

Galatians 5:17

B. My quality of life is affected.

Mark 4:19-39

Psalms 47 Proverbs 3

C. My life is unmanageable.

Proverbs 10

Romans 7:8

I have become aware and am in agreement that I have no control over my issue (alcohol). In fact I am powerless. No one wants to admit powerlessness, so if you will help me to identify my problem and teach me about it (give me an education), I can work it out from there.

"Willpower" is not the answer. If only I can get a hold on myself (is what we really think to ourselves), I can make it. Every time this problem comes up I'm able to get myself together and keep going although it gets harder and harder. I have found that willpower tests itself and soon slips from over-confidence.

"Education" is not the answer (in itself). Learning that you are an addicted person and finding out that your husband, wife, job, school, teachers, business, church, kids, mother and father play a major role in your feelings will not stop the problem. Add willpower to this and we have still not got the problem licked (Oh boy! Now what?).

This problem has caused heartaches personally inflicted on others. I have hurt other people and lost much of my self respect, my finances and living conditions have gone down hill. I've lost jobs, made myself out to be the fool, lost friendships and affected my health. I've thought about ending it all.

Accepting the fact that you are powerless over the problem can set you free (Romans 8:1). I am powerless over other people; they are responsible for themselves and their own actions. I am powerless over my addiction. If I have one drink or put myself in the position of having to face the peer pressure to use, I am powerless. I am affected physically and/or emotionally. I have patterns of thinking and dealing with others that include, deceit and lying, and that is incorrect. My thinking is faulty. When I come to admit that my thinking has been wrong I can let go of the guilt, and unsure thinking, distrust, and resentment.

I may now begin to look at myself as a real person, not a made-up mask of what I thought others wanted me to be, and become "Myself."

I can now really think about the life style I would be giving up. A road to nowhere, pain, fear and discomfort. But the work is just beginning; it is an uphill climb, but the "power" to become that new person is here.

Let us start at the beginning. Why are we powerless and what is powerlessness? Sometimes we say, tongue-in-cheek "I have no control over this or that." when all along we are sure that if we really tried we could change the problem or do away with it entirely.

The American Heritage dictionary's definition of helpless is; unable to manage by oneself, defenseless, dependent lacking power or strength, unable to be remedied.

My wife had a way about her that I loved, she was outspoken and real in most issues. She would think a position through and could then pinpoint the problem and give the solutions at the same time. But, when she did this at any level of our relationship there arose an anger that would cause me to want to strike out. Sometimes I would just go to work or sulk, but soon I began to solve the problem. If I suspected an encounter, I would have a few beers to calm the storm. Over the years I spent time away from home, drank too much, kicked myself and had repeated arguments with my wife. I was helpless over the problem. I tried to adjust her way of thinking so that I could do no wrong in her eyes, I bribed her and conned her. Soon the failures piled up and the resentments grew, until I could see a put-down in every direct statement made to me. I was sure I was being used and got even angrier.

I was helpless over my problem. I started building a wall that would keep me from being hurt, only to find I had made a prisoner of myself. I was so glad to get to a place, after some hard work, to know that my life depended on my giving up and letting go of trying to control my wife. She was in control of her life. I had no power over her and I needed to give the restoration "power" of change in my life to God.

(2 Timothy 2:19-26) Read before continuing:

Saying that we really don't need to examine our powerlessness is as much a symptom of addiction, as damaged lives. As we continue to move forward in our understanding of just how powerless we are, we can realize that we are responsible for the problem that has overtaken us. We don't have to be ashamed to admit we have a problem and are powerless over it. We also will come to know that we cannot become adjusted to the problem. We must, through a group that helps us to reshape our thinking, ROM 12:1-2, that offers fellowship and caring on a weekly, if not daily basis. The power of God is helping me to work through the sin issue.

I am a diabetic, I must check my blood sugar each day and make corrective steps to maintain my health. (If I don't it will destroy me.)

OK, OK, So I admit I have a problem.

OK, OK, I'm powerless over my _____.

Now I must take responsibility of my addiction, co-addiction. Now that I have recognized it, or it has been pointed out, I realize I am a person with a problem. It is now my responsibility to take action.

What do I do?

Do's

- 1 Stop using personally (separate yourself from your sin)
- 2 Study your powerlessness
- 3 Take a hard look at yourself
- 4 Ask God to forgive you
- 5 Forgive yourself (Phil 3:13, Romans 8:1)

The idea is, that Christ's blood was shed for our forgiveness to set us free from the penalty of our sins. To deliver us from self bondage, past hurts and habits. So, we are no longer condemned of our past and are set free to forgive, let go, move on, not look back. Forgiving ourselves, forgiving others and let our resentments, fade away

- 6 Seek the power to overcome (John 1 : 1-14 emphasis on John 1 : 12)
- 7 Do the beginning work completely
- 8 Read all the Bible verses and chapters, again and again
- 9 Apply what has been learned
- 10 Pray daily

Do Not's

- 1 Condemn yourself (Read Romans 7 : 24-25, & Romans 8 : 1-4)
- 2 Try to justify

Just to stop drinking or using is not enough, or separating yourself from any other problem in your life. To complete the growth needed to work through our powerlessness we must take a real look and honestly see what our problem has done to our lives up to this point. We need to take a look at the sad prospects that could lie ahead. We want to be set free to live a life that is right for man and have the abundant life. (Psalm 43) In our growth there will be pain, as we search our emotions and feel the growth from within. (Psalm 5) Most of us have a low tolerance for change.

Then there's mourning, BUT NOW, as we study and pray honestly facing out past, seeing our problem from a fresh perspective and allow God's work in our lives, we can be sure we will come to a place where it's good. We have only begun, just as a long journey started with the first step. This is just a beginning; it does not take away from the other studies in this program. But, it serves as a solid foundation.

(Matthew 7) We are not living life as fully as we could because we are in a state of stress that keeps our lives for the most part unmanageable. It could be our finances, personal lives, time, work, health, etc. I would say that in my life it was every part that was affected by my addiction (Co-addiction). As for myself I was trying to have the biggest little business in town. I wanted all the money, but all of the free time too. I wanted a family, but a private personal life along with them. I wanted friends, but not the responsibility of friendship. I wanted to be loved in a way I could control, but I didn't really know how to love in return. I wanted the respect of my children, but couldn't find the time to build any trust. I couldn't understand why they just didn't give it to me; after all I was the bread winner and father. I deserved respect and gratitude and trust, it came with fathering a child didn't it? My problem with addiction, co-addiction, took up most of my time, it ran most of my life.

AS I SEE IT NOW...

My association with people who were of like mind had a lot to do with my decision to continue in indulging in my problem (alcohol). We could always find a reason to use, good day, bad day, weekend, to get through the week, rainy day or sunny day, any reason would do. I developed a peer group that applied the choice I wanted. It seemed I could not break their hold on me; as much as I wanted to stop being the way I was, there was no way. Later, as I became more completely taken over by my problem, I wanted to be alone. Just me and my problem. We were friends. It protected me from those friends, who in the past had misused me. It comforted me when I could not cope with new responsibilities, and when old responsibilities got to be too much, it hid me from reality. As my guilt grew over my inability to cope, I found I didn't want to live this way, but I had no choice in the matter. I was alone!

OTHER PEOPLE.

My distrust made me to believe that no one cared for me. They just wanted to control my life, and since I couldn't, I was afraid that I might really be taken over and misused. I was afraid.

I failed at jobs I started, I failed at personal relationships, and it was hard for me to accept help. I felt like that if anyone really cared for me, they would fix me. Give me a job so good that all my problems would be over. Then my children would make me so proud that our life would be perfect and my wife would be the wife and mother I thought I wanted. Soon we would be in storybook land. The other fellow always seemed to get just what I wanted. "Life wasn't fair." Why should everyone else get all the breaks? On my job someone else always seemed to be in the right spot at the right time. Not me, Boy! I always got stepped on by that other guy. You could be sure that if something good did come along, I had to watch my back. Because, it wasn't free you know, I'll have to pay. I know what to do, I'll quit, give up, stop. Turn it down, I don't need any favors.

THEN..

When I was faced with the reality of just where I was and started to look at what was ahead, there started to be a longing inside to get going, in an honest way. To put things, people and myself in proper order. I guess that what I wanted all this time was to have my cake and eat it too. I admit, I'm still tempted to try for it, but I know I'm asking the impossible. To do that I needed a time machine.

WORKSHEET - STEP #1

The First Step is the foundation to recovery. The following work paper is designed to assist you in proving and accepting, on a gut level, your individual powerlessness and unmanageability over your problem.

POWERLESSNESS

- A. How has your problem placed your life or the lives of others (Give a name) in jeopardy?

- B. How have you lost self-respect due to your problem?

- C. What is it about your behavior that your spouse, family or friends object to most?

D. How have you tried to control your problem?

E. Give five examples of how powerlessness (loss of control) has revealed itself in your own personal experience.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

F. What type of physical or emotional abuse has happened to you or others as a result of your addiction/co-addiction?

G. What is your current physical and emotional condition?

H. What is the difference between admitting something and accepting it?

I. Are you admitting or accepting?

I) Define how you are admitting or accepting through your behavior.

J. What convinces you that you can no longer use alcohol or drugs (legal or illegal) safely or other hurts, habits and hang ups?

K. What convinces you that it is not in your best interest to continue living as you have in the past with the disease of co-dependency?

L. Are you an alcoholic or chemically addicted person? YES / NO

M. Are you a co-alcoholic or co-dependent person? YES / NO

N. Are you bulimic? YES / NO

O. Are you anorexic? YES / NO

P. Other hurts, habits, or hang-ups? (Name them)

A. What does unmanageability mean to you?

B. What could you identify as your "social unmanageability?"

C. Give six examples of your sober personal unmanageability.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

D. What goals have you set for your life?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

E. Prior to treatment, of your recovery program, how did you try to achieve those goals?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

F. Give three examples of feelings you have tried to alter or cover up with the use of chemicals. If you are a co-dependent give three examples of feelings you have the most trouble dealing with. How have these hurts, hang-ups and habits been used to cover up these feelings?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

G. How did you try or how have you tried to change your image prior to treatment or prior to involvement in a program?

H. What crisis besides the one that got you into treatment or group therapy would eventually have happened?

I. What is the difference between you and other people?

Give fifteen reasons why you should continue with the program.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

STEP #2

Came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.

Philippians 2:13

"FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU TO WILL AND TO ACT ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PURPOSE."

Additional scriptures to look up:

Psalms 34:18-22

John 3:16-17

Romans 8:38-39

Corinthians 1:9

Isaiah 40:28-31

Isaiah 41:10

Matthew 14:22-34

Mark 9:23-24

Matthew 13:1-13

Ephesians 4:20-24

Matthew 17:20

(One small step toward Him)

STEP #2 - Explanation

I believe that God can restore my dignity and sanity.

INSANITY

I heard somewhere, that there was an enemy that wanted to destroy me, that it would kill if given the chance. My life has no real rhyme or reason. (Matthew 13:1-13) I think mostly on the things of the past.

- My real feelings are stuffed, as far as the people who are involved are concerned. But I keep thinking of them. My feelings about the problems that I pretend do not exist are driving me crazy!
- I act as if everything is okay when confronted about there being a problem!
- I know how to solve my difficulties, but I don't take any action!
- I wait for my issues to go away when there are new ones coming up each week!
- I know I can hold a good job, but I don't!
- I am a very loving person, but I am so hateful!
- I am really a very strong person, yet I let people walk all over me!
- I can't help it! ! ! This is Insanity!

THE SEARCH

I see that God has set some rules to life and that we must allow Him to open our eyes and shine a light on the truth. (Matthew 13:15)

- My thinking is wrong, Oh God, help me to see Jesus!
- I have always been aware that the Bible was written about Jesus, at least the New Testament. I have heard this said by pastors, writers have published this information in books. Christmas is what it's all about. Easter has something to do with it. My mind has no problem owning up to the historical facts. But...
- Well, I've even tried praying to Him and I made many safe trips and got out of a few financial binds after praying, but that only lasted a while!
- I wanted my sanity to last!
- I wanted to believe!
- I knew that the Bible was considered to be the authority, so I researched and this is what I found. 740BC the bible said that the earth was round (a circle. Isaiah 40:22). This information was given 2,232 years before it was said to be fact. I learned that all races were of one blood hundreds of years before, the medical profession knew it to be true.
- There are hundreds of these faith building examples .
- I realized that God was able to do what he said and keep his promises.. (Matthew 6:30, 14:13-31, 2nd Timothy 1:7) I had to trust Him, He loves me, as one of the writers had said He did. He wanted me to have a sound mind.
- I answered OK!

WORKSHEET - STEP #2

"RETURNING TO SANITY"

STEP #2 - DATE STARTED _____

- I. MUST READ: "Evidence that Demands a Verdict,"
by Josh McDowell
- II. KEEP A JOURNAL: In the daily journal identify the "Insane State" for the day and give an explanation
- III. Take these verses one at a time and write what you think the verse means, as it applies to you

Philippians. 2:13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. (NIV)

Matthew 14:22-23 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, (NIV)

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (NIV)

Matthew 17:20 He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (NIV)

2nd Corinthians 1:9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. (NIV)

Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NIV)

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (NIV)

Psalms 34:18-22 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken. Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned. The Lord redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him. (NIV)

Isaiah 40:28-31 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (NIV)

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (NIV)

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (NIV)

Hebrews 12:7-12 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.

1 Peter 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. (NIV)

Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, (NIV)

Ephesians. 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace (NIV)

Hebrews 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (NIV)

Colossians. 1:13-14 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (NIV)

1 John 2:12 I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. (NIV)

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (NIV)

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (NIV)

1 Peter 1:18, 10 (Vs. 18) For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, (Vs. 10) Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care. (NIV)

Galations_ 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." (NIV)

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, (NIV)

Romans 1:7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV)

1st Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ -- their Lord and ours: (NIV)

Phillipians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: (NIV)

Deuteronomy. 20:13 When the Lord your God delivers it into your hand put to the sword all the men in it. (NIV)

Deuteronomy 28:13 The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. (NIV)

1 Peter 1:15-16 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (NIV)

Ephesians 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. (NIV)

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility gentleness and patience. (NIV)

Romans 8:33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. (NIV)

1st Corinthians 1:8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV)

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. (NIV)

Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. (NIV)

John 8:31-33 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Romans 8:1-2 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. (NIV)

1 Peter 2:23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. (NIV)

Romans 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (NIV)

Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (NIV)

Ephesians 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, (NIV)

1st Corinthians 1:30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-- that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. (NIV)

1st Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ-- their Lord and ours: (NIV)

Galatians. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (NIV)

Ephesians 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions— it is by grace you have been saved. (NIV)

Romans 5:19b so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. (NIV)

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, (NIV)

2nd Corinthians 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: (NIV)

(2nd Corinthians cont'd)

Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. (NIV)

Colossians 2:7 Rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. (NIV)

Colossians. 2:11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, (NIV)

Eph. 2:19-20 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. (NIV)

1 John 4:17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. (NIV)

1st John 5:18 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. (NIV)

John 5:1 Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. (NIV)

Revelation 17:14 They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings- and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."

Ephesians 5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children. (NIV)

STEP #3

I Made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God.

Romans 12:1

"THEREFORE, I URGE YOU, BROTHERS, IN VIEW OF GOD'S MERCY, TO OFFER YOUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES, HOLY AND PLEASING TO GOD - WHICH IS YOUR SPIRITUAL WORSHIP."

Proverbs 3:5-6

"TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING; IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT."

Additional scriptures to look up:

John 1:12-13

Matthew 11:28-30

Galatians 2:20

Jeremiah 29:11-14

Proverbs 16:3

(God leads us to a victory over trials of this life so that we may be perfect in His sight.)

Step #3 Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I turn my life over to you, to mold me and to do with me as you will. Trusting that you will guide my steps, I enter the world with hope; that I may better do your will. I welcome your Holy Spirit's Power, Love and Guidance in everything I do. Amen

EXPLANATION / WORKSHEET - STEP #3

Made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God.

I have tried and failed more times than I care to admit. I know that there is a God that loves me and wants my life to be free of guilt and self destruction.

Read: John 10:1-10

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

I need this guiding force in my life. I have decided to hear the voice of God through my spirit man or inner self. I will learn to respond to this call of Jesus on my life and will. I don't understand all that much now, but I've made up my mind to gain all the knowledge I can about what is expected of a surrendered life to God.

Read: Philippians 2:5-11

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

What is this that happened to Jesus? It seems that he left all he had in heaven and came down here to earth to give up immortality and take on a body that could die. I can see that he in some way was dying even then. He was humbled and became only a shadow of his former life as the Son of God, "Jehovah." But so that he could understand the pain, Jesus even went so far as to allow nails to be driven through his hands and feet, with all his weight, hanging there, until filled with pain and unable to get his breath he died. He was raised from the dead by the power of God. This power is what I now decide to turn my will and my life over to.

Read: Galatians 2:20 and Psalm 4:01

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

If only I can learn of Jesus, who is waiting to forgive all my sins, to cover them with his righteousness. I must ask him to forgive me and to come into my life and guide me.

Read: Psalm 134:1 and Proverbs 3:5

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

I want to trust, but that's been a real problem for me. Most of my hurt has been from trusts I have had. Trusting in man will always lead to disappointment and hurt. Jesus will never leave me or forsake me. He only wants to be acknowledged in the things I do, and He will guide me.

Read: Proverbs 28:26 and Proverbs 16:7

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

I have tried it my way and it didn't work. I want peace in my life. I believe I can find this in Jesus Christ.

Read: Psalm 119:164 and Proverbs 2:6

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

God offers a plan that I can both see and feel. I will study to know more of His plan for my life.

Read: John 3:16

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

Read: John 3:6

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

Read: John 10:9

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

Read: Acts 2:21

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

Read: Acts 4:12

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

Read: Acts 15:11

Self interpretation of what this means to me:

STEP #4

We Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Lamentations 3:40

“LET US EXAMINE OUR WAYS AND TEST THEM, AND LET US RETURN TO THE LORD.”

The real growth of your journey begins here with the fourth step. Here is where you get in touch with your “Shadow”, the part of you that you have hidden away for so long. Step four requires honest confrontation, some risking, and some leveling. You need to learn what your defense mechanisms are that have perhaps, become a shield behind which to hide.

Additional scriptures to look up:

Jeremiah 17:9-10

James 1:19-21

Galatians 6:3-5

2nd Corinthians 13:5-6

Ephesians 4:31

Lamentations 3:19-22

Colossians 3:5-8

Psalms 139:23-24

(Who am I anyway? God knows; He always has.)

The major part of this inventory will be to look at our personality traits or weaknesses that we have carried around with us, not to dwell on them, but to accept and grow from them. We also need to look at our strengths or positive traits, which for many of us can sometimes be just as difficult to acknowledge as the negative. We need to build on the positive and grow from the negative.

Ephesians 4:31

“GET RID OF ALL BITTERNESS, RAGE AND ANGER, BRAWLING AND SLANDER, ALONG WITH EVERY FORM OF MALICE.”

STEP #5

I have admitted to God, to myself, and to my accountability partner the exact nature of my sins.

James 5:16a

“THEREFORE CONFESS YOUR SINS TO EACH OTHER AND PRAY FOR EACH OTHER SO THAT YOU MAY BE HEALED.”

In Step Four we took inventory of our wrongs, and in Step Five we “own up” to our wrongs, which give us the desire and strength to then release them. We release the power that these “shadows” have had over us, by telling them to God, to ourselves and my accountability partner. We also need to accept the feedback that this person may give us, in order to help in our progress.

Additional scriptures to look up:

James 4:7-8

Jeremiah 14:20

Romans 14:12

1st John 1:8-9

Luke 15:17-19

Psalms 32:3-5

James 5:16

Proverbs 28:13

In Step Five, we must relentlessly expose the exact nature of our wrongs, certain of God's merciful pardon.

Proverbs 30:32

Romans 3:23

STEP #6

I am entirely ready to have God remove all of these defects of character.

James 4:10

"HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE THE LORD, AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP."

Step Six is not an action step that we actually take. It is a *state* of being that enables us to release our faults to God.

1st Peter 1:13-14

"THEREFORE, PREPARE YOUR MINDS FOR ACTION; BE SELF CONTROLLED; SET YOUR HOPE FULLY ON THE GRACE TO BE GIVEN YOU WHEN JESUS CHRIST IS REVEALED."

Recognizing the need for change and being willing to change are two different matters. The space between recognition and willingness to change can be filled with fear. As we move toward willingness, we must let go of our fears, trusting in God to make us renewed with His strength.

Additional scriptures to look up:

Psalms 37:4-5	Philippians 3:12-14
Romans 12:2	2 nd Thessalonians 3:3
1 st John 5:14-15	James 1:5-6

STEP #7

I have Humbly asked Him to remove my shortcomings.

1st John 1:9

“IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST AND WILL FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND PURIFY US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.”

In order to remove our defects we must be willing to work with God, as we refocus our attention and activities. Because “old behaviors” have a way of reemerging unexpectedly, we need to be aware of this, so that they don’t subtly ingrain themselves again. Remember, be patient with yourself, you won’t always do everything right the first time, it takes practice, and these behaviors have been around a long time.

Additional scriptures to look up:

Psalms 25:8-11	Philippians 4:6
Matthew 23:12	James 4:6-8
Psalms 51:10-12	1 st Peter 5:6-7
Psalms 51:1-2	Acts 3:19

Step #7 prayer:

My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in your way of my usefulness to you and my fellow man. Grant me the strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen

STEP #8

I made a list of all the persons I had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Luke 6:31

"DO TO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU."

Additional scriptures to look up:

Luke 19:8 1

John 4:11-12

Matthew 6:14-15

Romans 2:1

Luke 6:27-31, 37-38

Ephesians 4:32

Matthew 7:3-4

Mark 11:25

Notice that this step is in preparation to Step Nine. We must first prepare ourselves mentally and spiritually, with much honesty and with God's help. Step Eight helps us to sort through those people we have harmed and those who have harmed us, and put them all together for the single purpose of forgiving. Our past behaviors have usually been, to blame others for things gone wrong, instead of looking at the role that we had in them. Also remember that no matter how our efforts are received, we must still be willing to forgive. This step is mainly for our benefit to further our growth, realizing that with every skill, this takes time and commitment.

STEP #9

Make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Matthew 5:23-24

“THEREFORE, IF YOU ARE OFFERING YOUR GIFT AT THE ALTAR AND THERE REMEMBER THAT YOUR BROTHER HAS SOMETHING AGAINST YOU, LEAVE YOUR GIFT THERE IN FRONT OF THE ALTAR. FIRST GO AND BE RECONCILED TO YOUR BROTHER; THEN COME AND OFFER YOUR GIFT.”

Good judgment, a careful sense of timing, courage and stamina are the qualities we need to develop when working Step Nine. Some stumbling blocks appear in this step, procrastination (the time is not yet right) and delaying by letting bygones be bygones (let the past die). In some instances only partial disclosure is appropriate, when total disclosure would injure the party involved or others. In these areas we might seek additional counsel in order to assess our judgment of the situation. It is better to proceed slowly and succeed, rather than hurry and cause more hurt. Occasionally emotional or spiritual relapses are to be expected, but dealt with, lest our progress is halted. When these relapses happen we need to see them as signals that we are not working the Steps effectively. Maybe we let our relationship with God grow cold and we need to return to Step Three or we may have allowed a character defect to remain, so we then need to return to Step Six.

Additional scriptures to look up:

1st John 4:19-21 Ezekiel 33:15-16
1st Thessalonians 5:11 Romans 14:13
Luke 6:35-36 Romans 13:8
Romans 12:17-18 Philippians 2:3-4
Matthew 5:43-44

(Forgiveness; this includes self)

STEP #10

I continue to take a personal inventory and when I am wrong I promptly admit it.

1st Corinthians 10:12

"SO, IF YOU THINK YOU ARE STANDING FIRM, BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DON'T FALL."

Step Ten starts the maintenance part of our program. The first nine steps showed us our part in our separation from God and how to go about repairing the damage done. Now, in Step Ten, we need to take a spot-check inventory, looking at what is going on with us in the here and now. A daily inventory where we look over the day's activities and assess our behavior and long term inventory; a time when we take some quality time with ourselves and God. Assessing what has been going on over the course of time. These inventories will keep us on track and allow us to see what we need to work on in our lives.

Additional scriptures to look up:

Psalms 34:12b

Romans 12:13

Ephesians 4:22-24

Ephesians 5:15-16

Matthew 5:25-26

James 1:23-25

2nd Corinthians 5:17

Proverbs 14:29-30

STEP #11

I have sought through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact and daily walk with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry it out.

Colossians 3:16a

"LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY."

This step like Step Ten is a step that keeps us on the right track. Without God's help through all these steps it would have been very hard to do it on our own. Without God's daily help and wisdom, we would not go very far in our progress.

Additional scripture to look up

Luke 6:45,-49

Mark 11:24

Matthew 6:6

Matthew 7:7

Psalms 1:1-3

Psalms 119:105-106

Matthew 21:22

Isaiah 30:21

Hosea 6:3

"LET US ACKNOWLEDGE THE LORD, LET US PRESS ON TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIM. AS SURELY AS THE SUN RISES, HE WILL APPEAR; HE WILL COME TO US LIKE THE WINTER RAINS THAT WATER THE EARTH."

STEP #12

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps I am ready to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all of my affairs.

Galatians 6:1

"BROTHERS, IF SOMEONE IS CAUGHT IN A SIN, YOU WHO ARE SPIRITUAL SHOULD RESTORE HIM GENTLY. BUT WATCH YOURSELF, OR YOU ALSO MAY BE TEMPTED."

This is the last step to climb in this particular journey. As we know life is not as simple as just completing twelve steps. We will have other problems and issues in life to deal with on a daily basis and with our knowledge in these twelve steps we can apply these same principles to all areas in our lives.

Without the Lord's guidance and strength we would not be able to climb these steps. Our continued growth will only be as good as our relationship to God and our ability to allow Him to have His way in our lives. As for carrying this message to others the old cliché "Actions speak louder than words" is most appropriate for the Twelve Steps. It is more effective to witness a principle being applied than to hear lectures on theory alone.

Additional scriptures to look up:

Philippians 4:8-9

Titus 3:3-7

Colossians 4:5-6

2nd Timothy 4:2

Mark 5:19

Ephesians 5:1-2

1st Peter 4:11

The Twelve Steps are taken from "The Twelve Steps for Christians from Addictive and Dysfunctional Families," by Friends in Recovery.

THE THREE HEADED DRAGON

(by: Chuck Brissette, notes)

ALCOHOLISM:

1. Chronic: life-long
2. Is irreversible: either active or arrested
3. Can be arrested: put to sleep (choose not to pick up the first drink)
4. Is progressive: always grows worse, never better.

I. **First Head:** (Drinking/Addiction to Chemical)

The barrier to the first Head is Denial and Drinking. Hitting bottom is the break-through in the elimination of the First Head, but it is not the whole answer, two-thirds of the problem remains.

II. **Second Head:** (Thinking)

The barrier to this head is the Intellectual Rationalizing, with the nature of self-deception. There is a loss of ability to be honest with oneself (operating with old ideas, attitude, and values even when not drinking will prohibit recovery). Seeking external changes only will always cause the alcoholic to drink again.

III. **Third Head:** (Feelings)

The character of Denial is involved with this head; admits to problem, denies any solution (the solution is to change yourself) . Dealing with feelings and thinking is essential to generating any recovery.

Feelings should begin to surface and emotional pain will be experienced and become more intensified (fear, anxiety, depression, loneliness, internal problems) ~will cause the alcoholic to feel worse. Awareness of emotional immaturity is a key issue; if the alcoholic continues in self-deception he will deny himself emotional growth. There is a great fear of staying sober at this point and powerlessness over feelings.

When the drinking stops, self-deception and emotional immaturity must be dealt with.

The Solution to Recovery is Three-Fold:

1. Stop drinking
2. Self honesty
3. Grow-up emotionally

It is impossible to deal with this solution alone, the alcoholic needs other people.

JOHARI WINDOW

The window's four panes represent four aspects of our total self. As the diagram indicates, only the top two panes are visible to myself. Panes three and four are hidden from my view. This is descriptive of self delusion that keeps me from seeing what I'm really like and allows my slow disintegration to continue with only a slight, if any, recognition of how bad things have become. A more accurate picture of myself is essential to recovery.

Window No. 1 is open. This is visible to "Self" and "Others" and contains material I am willing to share with you; my interests, vocation, and virtues to name a few. This is information about myself.

Window No. 2 is secret. I know things about me that I don't want you to know. I fear the loss of esteem if you see me as having such feelings as hostility, suspicion, inferiority, resentment, or self pity. Revealing these feelings is called leveling. I level with you when I take the risk of letting you really know me by spontaneously reporting my feelings. Leveling is one of the two most important techniques in self-recovery.

We are blind to Window No. 3, and yet it is seen by others. The tone of our voice or the tilt of our head tell others things about us that we don't see. Many times a perfect stranger can see more in us in half an hour than we have discovered in years of self-examination. When someone tells us how we appear to them, they are confronting us.

Confrontation is the second vital technique in breaking through self-delusion to self-discovery.

The existence of the large blind area illustrated by Window No. 3 means that we are dependent on others taking the risk of confronting us with this material if we are to ever come to know it. "It takes at least 2 to know 1."

Window No. 4 is subconscious and is not visible. While leveling and confronting often result in a glimpse into the unconscious, this is a bonus and not a goal of group therapy.

CONFRONTATION is defined as: presenting a person with himself, by describing how I see him. Confrontation is most useful when spoken with concern and accompanied with examples of the confronted behavior or data.

"You seem self-centered to me because you only talk about yourself..."

(Expand top or bottom margin to put the above line on the same page as the rest.)

LEVELING

To respond openly to being confronted is to level. We level when we take the risk of being known by spontaneously reporting our feelings. For example; we level when we let someone know we are hurt, afraid or angry.

Using these feelings as an example of leveling is probably useful for two reasons. Anger bottled up, or fear that is kept hidden, seems to lead to more relapses than any other feelings. Also anger and fear (along with affection) are usually the hardest feelings for us to report. Frequently, people make the mistake of assuming that the purpose of group therapy is to make someone angry. Anger is an important feeling, but is only one feeling among many that we want to discover and level with.

If, instead of leveling, we respond without naming a feeling, we are hiding. The ways we hide our feelings are many, and we call them defenses. Each defense serves to avoid naming the feelings we are now experiencing. This prevents us from being known. One of the most helpful things that the group can do is to help a member identify his defenses.

Defenses which we all use to some extent are:

Rationalizing	Minimizing
Justifying	Evading/Dodging
Projecting	Defiance
Judging/Moralizing	Attacking/Aggression
Intellectualizing	Withdrawing
Analyzing	Verbalizing/Talking
Explaining	Shouting/ Intimidating
Theorizing	Threatening
Generalizing	Frowning
Quibbling/Equivocation	Glaring
Debating/Arguing	Staring
Sparring	Joking
Questioning/Interrogating	Grinning/Smiling/Laughing
Switching	Projecting
Denying	Agreeing
Being Smug/Superior/Arrogant	Complying

Try leveling with that feeling of fear for a starter and discover how that makes you feel. You'll probably find, as others have, that when you report a feeling you modify or reduce it. Keeping it a secret seems to increase its power. If we don't begin now to risk being genuine and self-revealing, when will we ever really do it?

FEELINGS

The very basis of our self awareness (consciousness) and self image is our continued flow of feelings. Many times these are expressible in words, i.e., fear, joy, love, hurt, and ecstasy. Frequently they go so deep and profound that they resist being put into words; still they are the foundation of our life and experience.

Almost any feelings can influence us toward drinking. We experience many different feelings each hour, and some of them almost seem to "push" us towards alcohol.

Sometimes people try to handle difficult feelings by avoiding them, or not letting themselves be aware of them, this almost always spells trouble. Unaccepted or hidden feelings tend to fester and burn up our insides, finally this becomes unbearable and we either explode destructively or "drink it off." We do not have much control over how we feel at any given moment; however, our present attitudes, patterns of living, and present situation will do much to determine how we react to our feelings, what the results of our feelings will be, and what our subsequent feelings will be like.

It is important that we learn to give expression to our feelings as near to the time they occur as possible. We learn that by letting our feelings flow (telling our friends and family, and learning to find satisfying expressions of feelings) we avoid destructive damming up.

The more we are able to express and accept our feelings, the more we will become aware of our present self. The more creative our attitudes, patterns, and life situations are, the more growth producing our feelings will become.

ATTITUDES

Our attitudes are the ideas by which we interpret our feelings and experiences. Our attitudes give us our unique meaning to life. Some attitudes are typical, these pre-judge and determine that nothing good, worthwhile, or lasting will happen to us. Some attitudes are too "feeling good oriented," that is, they are filled with expectations that everything should be good or "I shouldn't feel pain." Pain, unhappiness, blues, and boredom are natural experiences in life (we may, as emotional beings, experience cycles of highs and lows, ecstasy and blues). These times of discomfort are not destructive, except if our attitudes make us unable to accept them and cope with them. Our attitudes also go hand in hand with our self-identity or self-image. If you see yourself as a "loser," your attitudes will interpret your feelings and experiences as "losers." If you see yourself as someone who frequently gets taken advantage of, then your attitudes will interpret your experiences to support this.

Just as we have learned attitudes which lead us towards self-contempt and relentless relentlessness, so we may learn attitudes which bring us self-respect and contented sobriety.

A person may learn an attitude of self-adequacy, i.e. "I can handle this situation even though it is hard."

A person may learn an attitude that they are worthwhile in and of themselves. No matter how much about themselves they would like (and need) to change, they are still valuable - they are OK! Being a person and being alive means growth and change. This attitude also includes putting yourself as a priority, i.e., "I must take care of myself first."

RISKS

To laugh is to RISK appearing the fool

To weep is to RISK appearing sentimental

To reach out for another is to RISK involvement

To expose feelings is to RISK exposing your true self

To place your ideas or your dreams before a crowd is to RISK their loss

To love is to RISK not being loved in return

To live is to RISK dying

To hope is to RISK despair

To try is to RISK failure

But risks in life must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.

The person who risks nothing does nothing, has nothing and is nothing.

They may avoid suffering and sorrow, but they can not learn, feel, change, grow, love or live.

Chained by their certitudes, they are a slave. They have forfeited their freedom.

Only a person who risks is FREE!

RESENTMENT

(by: Jerry Reed)

RESENTMENT (Re-feeling) - Basically is unresolved hurt, most often caused by unrealistic expectations of others. Several resentments built-up, cause a continuum of emotional turmoil and instability. "Resentment" is an Un-word."

Unrealistic

Unstable

Uncaring

Unresolved

Unloving

Unable

Unwilling

Unforgiving

LEVEL 1

Resentments can be resolved (or at least made manageable) by:

- A. Forgiveness, and/or
- B. Dealing honestly with projected images

for example: The false image I have of self. "how I perceive myself," i.e.; warm, loving and kind, versus "how I really am," i.e.; not always, or seldom warm, loving or kind. Also, "How I perceive others," i.e.; unloving, rude, hateful, versus "How they really are," i.e.; in reality they are who they said they are, and I cannot change them.

If there is a difference in how I see myself and how I really am or how I see others and how they really are, it creates a conflict which in turn feeds and builds the hurt and if not properly dealt with at Level 1 passes on to Level 2.

LEVEL 2

This is the anger and fear stage.

Unreasonable anger (inappropriate) comes from compounded fears, frustrations, emotional pain, grief and an overall build-up of self hates, deceptions and unwillingness to deal with and face realities and forgive others. An angry person almost always blames others and holds tight to self-righteous delusions.

Fear, as it is evolved with resentments most often is connected with the ego, and becomes a matter of saving face. Not wanting others to see you as you really are, vulnerable with feelings of inadequacy, lacking in confidence and self-worth.

Resentments enforce, and are characteristic of alcoholic behavior patterns.

Resentments cause instability, lack of care, selfishness, unresolved hurt, unforgiveness and revengeful behavior. To cure resentment I will need to face and deal with my anger, hatred and fear. Resentment is an unresolved and unrealistic feeling of expectations for performance of another person. My resentment of another person not fulfilling my expectation is an alcoholic pattern of behavior in that I have become unable and unwilling to see anything from a different point of view.

The emotions and some aspects connected to resentments are:

1. Fear - I have to face my hurts, I have to change; I will no longer be able to blame someone else for my problems.
2. Anger - I want to hold onto my resentment for revenge, but in reality, I am giving the person I am angry with the power to "push my buttons" and repeatedly reduce me to angry responses.
3. Expectations - I am expecting someone else to live up to my ideal of them - they will not do it. (Face Reality)
4. Image of myself - Differs with how I really am - causes conflict and more hurt.

5. Image of others - I am not able to change them - I can only change myself.

The alcoholic is unable to deal with feelings and is overly sensitive.

To solve resentment:

1. Learn to forgive
2. Be honest with myself and how I am feeling
3. Determine which feelings are inappropriate and repent of those

"NO ONE ELSE CAN GET HEALTHY FOR ME"

A CURE FOR RESENTMENT

Is life treating you unfairly? Who do you resent? What is the secret to getting rid of that pain and frustration of resentment?

by: Dr. Vernon J. Bittner

There have been times in my life when I have gone out of my way to avoid confrontation. At other times I have faced someone but have kept quiet about what I was really feeling. After the confrontation, though, I could not hold back my thoughts. In my mind I went over and over what I would like to have said.

Resentments affect our physical, emotional and spiritual condition. It is an undercurrent that can surface with devastating effects, like churning of the stomach or inability to sleep.

We end up reliving again and again the situation which prompted the resentment, and feeling the pain and frustration.

There have been times when I have caught myself resenting the person who in some way was not living up to my expectations or perhaps had treated me unfairly. Because I have at times felt intimidated and have also been living out the life script that says, "I am to please others," I sometimes do not tell people how I feel. However, the more I have thought about the hurt feelings, the more upset I have become, not only with the person or persons involved, but also with myself for not stating how I felt.

Life is not always fair, and that is a reality of life. At least it doesn't always seem so with the limited information we have at any one given time. We have to face up to unfairness and learn a more constructive way of coping with it. Experiences have taught me how important it is to deal properly with my resentment, because it has resulted in depression for me at times, sometimes even in accidents.

There are people who hold on to resentments for years, sometimes even unaware that they are there. Many people harbor resentments from their childhood, and unfortunately, pass them on unconsciously as they live out their lives as parents and grandparents.

Year after year, deep-seated resentments cause us to use our energy to keep them repressed, thereby not having the energy to do other things that are constructive for spiritual, emotional and physical health. But there is a cure - a very simple one.

Forgiveness !!

By forgiving I do not mean that you necessarily like what happened, or that you trust the situation will change. Forgiveness only means that you let go of the hurt, pain and resentment so that you can feel better. To forgive someone is not to do them a favor, but it is doing yourself a favor so that you can feel better.

It is ironic, someone has done you an injustice (at least as you perceive it,) and you react to it by feeling resentment, which brings with it pain and anxiety. Then you are faced with having to forgive the person who hurt you, and forgive yourself for feeling hurt!

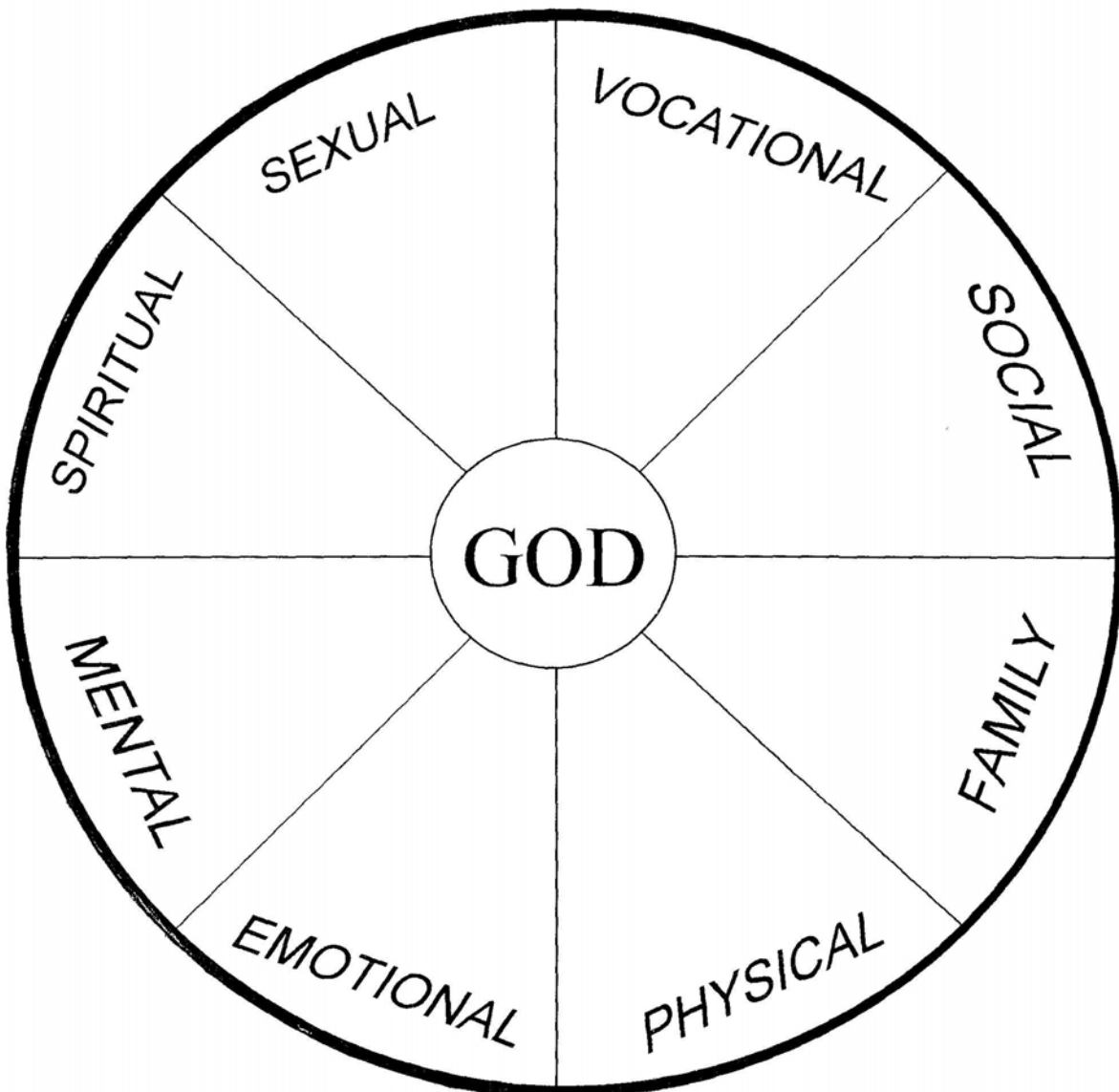
Sometimes it is hard to get to the point of being willing to forgive unless you realize that it is for your own good. One of the things that has helped me to come to this point is prayer. Prayer will lift the pain. It will create in me a kind of calmness and strength that I need to LET GO! In fact, what helps me is to pray for the person I resent. As I pray, my negative feelings dissolve and a new positive feeling emerges, culminating in a feeling of peace because I have forgiven the person or persons whom I resented.

Whenever I need a SURE CURE for what is ailing my emotional and spiritual life, I need to be mindful of what the GREAT PHYSICIAN says -- that we are to forgive "seventy times seven!!" That may seem superfluous, but we can't miss the point, forgiveness is The Answer!

GRAPEFRUIT TEST

Unmanageability – Powerless

How much is each area of your life affected by dependency or co-dependency?



LET GO

To "LET GO" does not mean to stop caring. It means I can't do it for someone else.

To "LET GO" is not to cut myself off. It's the realization I can't control another.

To "LET GO" is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences.

To "LET GO" is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands.

To "LET GO" is not to try to change or blame another, it's to make the most of myself.

To "LET GO" is not to care for, but to care about.

To "LET GO" is not to fix, but to be supportive.

To "LET GO" is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human being.

To "LET GO" is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to affect their destinies.

To "LET GO" is not to be protective, it's to permit another to face reality

To "LET GO" is not to deny, but to accept.

To "LET GO" is not to nag, scold or argue, but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them.

To "LET GO" is not to adjust everything to my desires, but to take each day as it comes and cherish myself in it.

To "LET GO" is not to criticize and regulate anybody but, to try to become what I dream I can be.

To "LET GO" is not to regret the past, but to grow and live for the future.

To "LET GO" is to fear less, and to love more.

ENABLING BEHAVIORS

To enable the disease of alcoholism/chemical dependency means to shield or protect the alcoholic/chemically dependent person from the harmful consequences of their drinking/using. It means to actually "love them to death."

We as family members must become aware of how we enable and then begin to change our own behavior. Why? Because enabling an alcoholic/chemically dependent person unwittingly contributes to the progression of the disease and ultimately destroys the enabler - because it **DOESN'T WORK!**

Enabling is not good or bad. The issue with enabling is what the behavior of enabling is focused on. Does the behavior enable the disease, or recovery?

Some general examples of enabling behavior:

1. Denial

- a. "He/she's not an alcoholic/chemically dependent - drinks/uses to much sometimes"
- b. "Can't be an alcoholic/chemically dependent - still has a job"
- c. "Never drinks/uses in the morning"
- d. "Never had a drunk driving ticket or D.U.I."
- e. "Doesn't drink/use every day"
- f. "Just a happy drunk/doper"
- g. "Never see him/her drunk/high"
- h. etc., etc., etc..

2. Drinking/using with him/her

The idea behind this is that the alcoholic/chemically dependent person:

- a. Will drink/use less
- b. Will see what its like being with someone who's drunk/loaded
- c. "If you can't beat `em, join `em"

3. Justifying the drinking/using by accepting the excuses/rationalizations/alibis given by the alcoholic/ chemically dependent person.

- a. "Job has too many pressures"
- b. "Kids are too noisy"
- c. "Boss is too hard on me"
- d. "When things get better... I'll cut down on my drinking/using"
- e. "I'm unemployed., have too much time on my hands"
- f. "Nobody understands me"
- g. "It relaxes me and gets me in the mood"

4. Keeping feelings inside

- a. Sitting on anger
- b. Holding back tears or crying alone
- c. Covering up fear
- d. Hiding shame
- e. Ignoring hurt/pain
- f. Rarely laughing

5. Avoiding/Ignoring problems

- a. Not making waves
- b. Walking on eggshells
- c. Keeping peace at all cost
- d. Leave `em alone
- e. Take it away

6. Minimizing

- a. It's not that bad, yet...
- b. He/she just has ups and downs
- c. Everybody's doing it

7. Protecting

- a. "I'll call your work and tell them you have the flu"
- b. "I'll cancel _____ (social event)"
- c. "I'll go get it for you"
- d. "I'll get the kids out of the way"

8. Controlling

- a. "I'll take care of the money"
- b. "I'll take care of the kids"
- c. "I'll take care of the house/yard"
- d. FINALLY - "I'll take complete care of you"

9. Avoiding by tranquilizing feelings

- a. With food
- b. With work
- c. With alcohol/drugs
- d. With sleep

10. Preoccupation

- a. Taking over responsibilities
- b. Obsessive thinking about him/her
- c. Allowing it to completely interfere in your own life
- d. Knowing that you'll be/feel okay once the alcoholic/ chemically dependent person "straightens up"

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A CO-DEPENDENT

These characteristics are offered as a tool to aid in self evaluation. They may be particularly helpful to newcomers as they begin to understand co-dependency,

- * I assume responsibility for others' feelings and/or behaviors
- * I feel overly responsible for others' feelings and/or behaviors
- * I have difficulty in identifying feelings - am I angry? Lonely? Sad? Happy?
- * I have difficulty expressing feelings - I am feeling... happy, sad, hurt, joyful
- * I tend to fear and/or worry how others respond to my feelings
- * I have difficulty in forming and/or maintaining close relationships

- * I am afraid of being hurt and/or rejected by others
- * I am a perfectionist and place too many expectations on myself and others
- * I have difficulty making decisions
- * I tend to minimize, alter or even deny the truth about how I feel
- * Other peoples' actions and attitudes tend to determine how I respond/react
- * I tend to put other peoples' wants and needs first
- * My fears of others' feelings (anger) determines what I say and do
- * I question or ignore my own values to connect with significant others. I value others' opinions more than my own
- * My self-esteem is bolstered by outer/other influences, I cannot acknowledge good things about myself.
- * My serenity and mental attention is determined by how others are feeling and/or behaving
- * I tend to judge everything I do, think or say harshly, by someone else's standards - nothing is done, said or thought "good enough" I do not know or believe that being vulnerable and asking for help is both okay and normal.

- * I do not know that it is okay to talk about problems outside the family; or that feelings just are - and it's better to share them than to deny, minimize or justify them.
- * I tend to put other people's wants and needs before my own
- * I am steadfastly loyal - even when the loyalty is unjustified - and personally harmful.
- * I have to be "needed" in order to have a relationship with others.

PATTERNS OF CO-DEPENDENCY

(Co-dependents Anonymous - 1988)

These characteristics *are* offered as a tool to aid in self— evaluation. They may be particularly helpful to newcomers as they begin to understand co-dependency.

My good feelings about who I am, stem from being liked by you

My good feelings about who I am, stem from receiving approval from you

Your struggle affects my serenity, my mental attention focuses on solving your problems or relieving your pain

My mental attention is focused on pleasing you

My mental attention is focused on manipulating you (to do it my way.)

My self-esteem is bolstered by solving your problems and relieving your pain

My own hobbies and interests are put aside, my time is spent sharing your hobbies and interests

Your clothing and personal appearance are dictated by my desires, as I feel you are a reflection of me

Your behavior is dictated by my desires, as I feel you are a reflection of me

I am not aware of how I feel, I am aware of how you feel

I am not aware of what I want — I ask what you want, I am not aware — I assume

The dreams I have for my future are linked to you

MY fear of rejection determines what I say or do

My fear of your anger determines what I say or do

I use giving as a way of feeling safe in our relationship

My social circle diminishes as I involve myself with you

Patterns of Co-dependency (cont'd)

I put my values aside in order to connect with you

I value your opinion and way of doing things more than my own

The quality of life is in relation to the quality of yours

AS A PERSON I HAVE THE RIGHT TO

- * Be myself
- * Refuse requests without feeling selfish
- * Be competent and be proud of my accomplishments
- * Feel and express anger
- * Ask for affection & help (may be turned down, but can ask)
- * Be treated as a capable adult
- * Be illogical in making decisions
- * Make mistakes and be responsible for them

- * Change my mind
- * Say, "I don't know"
- * Say, "I don't agree"
- * Say, "I don't understand"
- * Say, "I don't care"
- * Offer no reasons or excuses for justifying my behavior
- * Have my opinions be given respect
- * Have my needs be as important as the needs of others

As A Person I Have The Right To (cont'd)

- * Tell someone what my needs are (they may not care to do anything about it)
- * Judge my own behavior, thoughts, and emotions and be responsible for their initiation and the consequences upon myself
- * Judge if I am responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems
- * Take pride in my body and to define attractiveness in my own terms

* Grow, learn and change, and to value my age and experience

* And, sometimes to make demands on others...

SYMPTOMS OF RELAPSE

1. APPREHENSION ABOUT WELL BEING

The alcoholic reported an initial sense of fear and uncertainty.

2. DENIAL

The patient reactivated his denial system in order to cope with apprehension and resultant anxiety and stress.

3. ADAMANT COMMITMENT TO SOBRIETY

The patient convinced himself he would "never drink again."

4. COMPULSIVE ATTEMPTS TO IMPOSE SOBRIETY ON OTHERS

This attempt to impose sobriety or individual standards for recovery on others was seldom overt.

5. DEFENSIVENESS

The patient reported a noticeable increase in his defensiveness when talking about his problem or recovery programs.

6. COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR

Behavior patterns became rigid and repetitive

7. IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR

Patterns of compulsive behaviors began to be interrupted by impulsive reactions

8. TENDENCIES TOWARD LONELINESS

Patterns of isolation and avoidance increased

9. TUNNEL VISION

Patients tended to view their life in isolated fragments

10. MINOR DEPRESSION

Symptoms of depression began to appear and persist

11. LOSS OF CONSTRUCTIVE PLANNING

The patient's skills at life planning began to diminish

12. PLANS BEGIN TO FAIL

Due to lack of attention and detail, or the pursuit of unrealistic objectives, plans began to fail

13. IDLE DAYDREAMING AND LOSS OF CONCENTRATION

The ability to concentrate diminished and concentration was replaced with fantasy

14. FEELINGS THAT NOTHING CAN BE SOLVED

A failure pattern in sobriety was developed

15. IMMATURE WISH TO BE HAPPY

Conversational content and thought patterns became vague and generalized

16. PERIODS OF CONFUSION

The episodes of confusion increased in terms of frequency, duration and severity of behavior impairment

17. IRRITATION WITH FRIENDS

Social involvement including friends with intimate relationships, as well as treatment relationships formed with therapists and A.A. members became strained and conflictual

18. EASILY ANGERED

Episodes of anger, frustration, resentment and irritability increased

19. IRREGULAR EATING HABITS

The patient began overeating or undereating

20. LISTLESSNESS

Extended periods of inability to initiate action developed

21. IRREGULAR SLEEPING HABITS

Episodes of insomnia were reported

22. PROGRESSIVE LOSS OF DAILY SCHEDULE

Daily routines became haphazard

23. PERIODS OF DEEP DEPRESSION

Depression became more severe, more frequent, more disruptive and longer in duration

24. IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE OF TREATMENT MEETINGS

Attendance at A.A. became sporadic

25. DEVELOPMENT OF AN "I DON'T CARE" ATTITUDE

The patient generally reported this "I don't care" stance masked a feeling of helplessness and extremely poor image

26. OPEN REJECTION OF SELF

The patient cut himself off from viable sources of help

27. DISSATISFACTION WITH LIFE

The patient began to think "things are so bad now; I might as well get drunk because they can't get any worse."

28. FEELINGS OF POWERLESSNESS AND HELPLESSNESS

This was marked by an inability to initiate action

29. SELF PITY

The patient became indulgent in self-pity

30. THOUGHTS OF SOCIAL DRINKING

The patient realized that drinking could normalize many of the feelings and emotions he was feeling

31. CONSCIOUS LYING

Denial and rationalization became such extreme processes that even the alcoholic began to recognize the lies and deceptions

32. COMPLETE LOSS OF SELF CONFIDENCE

The patient felt he couldn't get out of this trap no matter how hard he tried.

IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO THIS ONE

A boy walked along the beach, bending over every few steps to pick up something and throw it into the ocean. A man watched him for a while, and then approached the boy. "What are you doing?" he said. "The storm washed these starfish high onto the beach, and as the tide goes out they are stranded here. Unless I throw them back, the noonday sun will kill them."

The man looked up and down the beach and said, "You are wasting your time, you know. Look at the beach. There must be thousands of starfish stranded on the sand. How can you possibly make a difference?"

The boy looked up and down the beach and thought for a moment. Then he bent over and picked up a starfish, and as he threw it back into the ocean he said, "It makes a difference to this one!"

THE MAN IN THE GLASS

When you get what you want from the struggle for gain, and the world makes you king for a day; just go to the mirror and look at yourself,
And see what the man has to say. It isn't your father, mother, husband or wife, whose judgment upon you must pass; the one whose verdict counts most in your life, is the one staring back in the glass. He's the one you must satisfy beyond the rest, for he's with you right up to the end, and you must pass your most difficult test, if the man in the glass is your friend. You may be the one who gets a good break, and think you are a wonderful guy; but the man in the glass says you're only a fake. If you can't look him straight in the eye. You may fool the whole world down the pathway of life,
And get pats on the back as you pass, but the final reward will be heartaches and tears, if you've cheated the man in the glass.

YESTERDAY - TODAY - TOMORROW_

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry, two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is **YESTERDAY** with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. **YESTERDAY** has passed forever beyond our control. All the money in the world cannot bring back **YESTERDAY**. We cannot undo a single act we performed; we cannot erase a single word we said. **YESTERDAY...** is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is **TOMORROW**, with its possible adversaries, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance.

TOMORROW is also beyond our immediate control. **TOMORROW'S** sun will rise, either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds, but it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in **TOMORROW...** for it is yet unborn.

This leaves only one day - **TODAY**. Any man can fight the battle of just one day. It is only when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternity's... **YESTERDAY** and **TOMORROW** that we break down. It is not the experience of **TODAY** that drives men mad - it is the remorse or bitterness for something which happened **YESTERDAY** and the dread of what **TOMORROW** may bring.

LET US, THEREFORE, LIVE BUT ONE DAY AT A TIME!!!

ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS

By Barbara J. Ham

November 1988

ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS

(A.C.A.)

ALCOHOLISM! The word can bring to mind various definitions depending on the experience or education one has had in regard to the subject. Simply put, alcoholism is a chronic, hereditary, and progressive disease which is always terminal. However recovery is possible. A person with this disease is called an alcoholic. The "ism" denotes the disease. This disease is not isolated and always affects the family.

This paper is focused on the co-dependents, particularly the children who enter adulthood just as sick as their parents. They typically grew up in "chaotic, up-side down worlds," the entire family being dysfunctional; they never really know what normal is. There are certain roles the children take on which can be interchangeable. These roles help the child to cope; survival is the goal for each one in the family. These survival techniques are adapted to build defenses that one can hide behind. Feelings are not a luxury to be chanced so hiding and lying are normal. To feel is often having to admit something is wrong. Shame, guilt, and resentment do not allow this. Normal well-adjusted people are not afraid of "upsetting the apple cart" every time something goes wrong. They know life is not dependent on them. Not so with the Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA)

In her book titled, "Adult Children of Alcoholics," Jane Woititz describes her roles spoken of;

1) **The hero**, this is generally an over achiever. A good student and probably seldom in trouble. Attempting to bring enough pride to the family and drinking parent to compensate for the drinking.

2) **The lost child**, is the one who completely withdraws from the family and enters their own world, preferring unreality to the reality of the unstable environment in which they live.

3) **The mascot**, generally very loving and giving, seeking the love and attention they are starved for. This child would have been the one with the good natured jokes and antics, clowning around taking life as a lark. But not clowning on the inside. (margins)

4) **The scapegoat or rebellious one**. Diverting attention away from what is happening by inappropriate behavior, getting into trouble or rebelling. After all, even bad attention is better than none, they figure.

Entering adulthood with these learned behaviors is, to say the least, a strong strike against any possibility of social adjustment. A vicious cycle of hurt, resentment, loneliness, depression and denial goes on.

ACA's do not form close or intimate relationships well. Sexual intimacy is usually not fulfilling and proper bonding to their children is not common. They are often seen as possessions and controlled to the point that their children do not learn to properly make decisions of their own. They find it hard to choose goals or follow through with their values. Values should be taught by a parent and values set, however the time comes when it must be actions from one's own choice, and not because of fear for disagreeing.

Sharing is involved in a healthy relationship. "It is important to offer to your partner that which you would want your parent to offer to you," says Jane Woititz. She gives an excellent profile of the ACA in her book, pgs. 4, 5. Ms. Woititz says half of the adult children she works with, are alcoholic themselves. No difference between male and female.

ACA's do not know what normal behavior is, they can only guess. It is not unusual, not to be able to complete a project once begun. Lying is a common defense. ACA's are very critical of themselves and others, and judge themselves without mercy. Fun is not spontaneous; they must actually put effort to it.

Responsibility is another area of trouble, either overly responsible, or not responsible at all. Learning to take responsibility for their actions is a step to recovery. For the child raised by an alcoholic, and an enabling parent, this means responsibility for not only unwise decisions, but for the good ones as well. Their self esteem is low and they are never sure of their own actions. The positive input all children need is rare, sometimes not received at all.

Strong loyalty is a quality. This can be a good quality, if it is not held because of fear. However, due to the secret within the family, and later fearing losing a relationship, "This so called loyalty is more the result of insecurity and fear than anything else; so the behavior that is molded is one in which no one walks away when the going gets rough. Sometimes relationships that should be broken are maintained." Janet G. Woititz, Ed.D. *Adult Children of Alcoholics*.

Denial

Denial is defined according to the manual of Psychiatric Nursing, as; "A defense mechanism by which the mind refuses to acknowledge a thought, feeling, wish, need, or reality factor." The most common defense listed is suppression and this means the focusing "the mind first on one topic and then another." The second listed is repression, operating subconsciously.

Once one knows of that which they unconsciously have chosen to forget, they are able to face where it comes from. This can be a very helpful and constructive release for one. In a suppressive defense the attempt is made, "willing him or herself not to think." Once this connection is made, one is able to recall these efforts at suppression. Everyone uses defenses at times and this can be helpful at times. However, to deny truth in preference or fear of "knowing" keeps one in bondage to their childhood if it was painful and has mixed emotions about family loyalty, and perhaps shame, though shame is not warranted.

Common defenses we all use might be projecting, laughing, rationalizing, justifying, explaining, defiance, agreeing, or evading, just to mention a few. The ACA has learned and adopted so many however, into their process of relating to people and circumstances that their real self remains hidden in many areas. ACA's are often very creative and quite bright with a lot of love to give, though that love is frequently never received by their sick parents. This is not only a loss to associations, self, and family, but frequently to society as well. One might be a gifted performer and artist who because of such low self-esteem is not able to quite believe in him or herself. While the strokes may be needed and desired, believing they are of worth could be very hard to accept. However, desiring the much wanted love and attention will continue. Many brilliant and talented people were children of alcoholic parents.

The family adopts the same co-dependent personalities. When the adult child learns it is all right to have feelings, good and bad, and that he or she can actually use those feelings once made known, to advantage, recovery is progressing. Accepting self as a valuable person with the ability to channel frustration or anger, not in a hurtful way, but a constructive way allows growth. This is not a one time experience, but a lifetime of healing and development. I know a young woman who as a child, lived with a grandmother who was sick with alcoholism. The family was also very sick with co-dependency. The child had learned early in her life to maintain the family "secret" at all costs. One afternoon she came to her grandmother who had suffered a heart attack and was near death.

The 9-year old child was horrified seeing her grandmother lying ill but not quite dead yet. Instead of running to a neighbor or telephone, she ran outside and hid in the bushes trying to hide from the truth that she should help, but it was ingrained in her mind not to let anyone know of Grandma's "sickness." Of course, that meant drunkenness, but a small child doesn't know the difference in adult thinking, only to obey.

Many years later after a near fatal suicide attempt, she received proper help and counseling, was able to come out of the denial of repressing her belief that she had actually caused the death. This young lady is soon expecting her own child, and is attending a good support group, learning to break the cycle learned in her own childhood. Hopefully controlling and manipulating and hiding will not be carried on in her child's life.

Guilt plagues the life of an ACA often. Everyone experiences guilt, but learning the difference between real and imagined guilt is necessary. If one deliberately commits an act of harm to self or others real guilt is felt and should be admitted as a mistake so it can be dealt with. This serves to help our growth as responsible human beings. On the opposite side, unreal or imagined guilt is like carrying a heavy weight strapped on one's body. Heavy, burdensome, and hopeless.

A healthy sense of self—worth is important in everyone's life. Without a sense of self-worth we are of no use to others. Adult children learn this self worth by allowing honest and loving confrontation that brings the ability to face truth. Truth of the past, the present and admitting that their life is just not always "fair." Some are born into families where accidents happen, cancer, diabetes and epilepsy strike, death from other diseases, and long term illness can divert attention from the family. To be raised in an alcoholic home does not mean they were not loved or worth loving. As adults though, when

recovery is possible so one can be a complete person, it should be sought. Adult Children of Alcoholics formed in the 1960's is a fairly new organization, similar to Alanon and A.A. There are support groups in churches, county clinics, and counseling is also available. The key is first deciding to seek it. One can learn principals and tools in coming to release the past hurts. In the final analysis, we have to admit we have no power over any person; we cannot remake people to suit ourselves; we cannot control people. Only God has that power. We can pray for acceptance of others as they are, learning an unconditional love for others.

ACA's, like most people, must learn not to expect another to meet their own standards. It is difficult to honestly face the conflicts and complexities of one's inner-self. Conflict may be a way of life to this point; it is not easy to live without it, so they could be "crisis oriented." The interaction in a group helps to trust, as they learn they are accepted, faults and all.

Forgiveness of self and parents breaks any hold others may have on us. One does not have to agree with a situation to forgive; I feel it is the real key to becoming a "Complete Person."

"The past exists only in
memory, consequences, and efforts

It has power over me only
as long as I continue to give my power to it.

I can
Let go, release it,
Move freely,
I am not my past, and my future is not yet

I can
Flee it, face it, embrace it,
and be free to live now."

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