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Growing Up In An Alcoholic Home

Some Questions That Provide Insight

By Buddy T, About.com Updated: August 15, 2007

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Growing up in home with an active alcoholic can affect how a child looks at life and almost everything in it.

On the [Al-Anon website](#) there is a list of questions entitled, "Did you grow up in an alcoholic home?"

The wording of these questions offer an insight into some ways children are affected by growing up in a alcoholic home.

1. Do you constantly seek approval and affirmation?

It may be because you don't really know what "normal" is -- you have to try to figure it out from the actions and reactions of others.

2. Do you fail to recognize your accomplishments?

What seems routine to you might be considered "overachieving" by everybody around you.

3. Do you fear criticism?

In childhood "criticism" often was accompanied by some form of abuse, verbal or otherwise.

4. Do you overextend yourself?

Just carrying a normal work load was never good enough. You had to do more to avoid the wrath of the alcoholic.

5. Have you had problems with your own compulsive behavior?

Without knowing it, you probably developed a pattern in childhood of approaching everything "alcoholically."

6. Do you have a need for perfection?

One little slip up and the alcoholic might explode into anger. That deep-seeded fear can carry over into adulthood.

7. Are you uneasy when your life is going smoothly, continually anticipating problems?

The alcoholic always sabotaged the "good times" like holidays, birthdays, vacations, etc. Things never turned out the way they were planned.

8. Do you feel more alive in the midst of a crisis?

People can become addicted to excitement. They find "normal" people and situations boring.

9. Do you still feel responsible for others, as you did for the problem drinker in your life?

There's always that nagging feeling that you were somehow responsible for the alcoholic's drinking. Maybe if you had done something differently...

10. Do you care for others easily, yet find it difficult to care for yourself?

You are comfortable in the "caretaker" role, but extremely uncomfortable doing things for yourself, like spending money on something just for you.

11. Do you isolate yourself from other people?

If they get too close, they may find out your "secrets."

12. Do you respond with fear to authority figures and angry people?

The authority figures in your childhood were probably abusive. You expect the same from all authority figures. When the alcoholic became angry, it usually meant something extreme was about to happen.

13. Do you feel that individuals and society in general are taking advantage of you?

You grew up with someone who was an expert at controlling and manipulating everyone around them. Trust is not something that comes naturally.

14. Do you have trouble with intimate relationships?

Possibly the only "love" that you saw demonstrated in childhood was the love the alcoholic had for the bottle.

15. Do you confuse pity with love, as you did with the problem drinker?

You may be attracted to people who "need" you or people you know that you can "fix."

16. Do you attract and/or seek people who tend to be compulsive and abusive?

Again, normal people bore you and you don't understand them. You are more comfortable around people who you can relate to and won't judge you.

17. Do you cling to relationships because you are afraid of being alone?

It may be from your deep-seeded fear of abandonment. One way or the other, your alcoholic parent emotionally or physically abandoned you for the bottle.

18. Do you mistrust your own feelings and the feelings expressed by others?

How many times have you heard, "I'm sorry. It won't happen again." But it did.

19. Do you find it difficult to identify and express your emotions?

You were told that it was not okay to cry. You were never allowed to be angry and if you were you faced serious consequences or ridicule.

20. Do you think parental drinking may have affected you?

Not everyone who drinks is an alcoholic. But it would be extremely difficult to grow up around excessive drinking and not be somehow effected.

If you answered yes to some of these questions, chances are you have been affected more than you may realize by the [family disease](#) of alcoholism. If so, you may want to learn more about by reading [these stories](#), visiting the [Al-Anon website](#), or checking this list of [Online meetings](#).

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