

## THE PROBLEM

Many of us find that we have several characteristics in common as a result of being brought up in an alcoholic household.

We came to feel isolated, uneasy with other people--especially with authority figures. To protect ourselves, we became people-pleasers, even though we lost our identity in the process. We perceive personal criticism as a threat. We either become alcoholics ourselves or marry them--or both. Failing that, we find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfill our sick need for abandonment.

We live life from the standpoint of victims. We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and prefer to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. We somehow get guilt feelings if we stand up for ourselves rather than giving into others. Thus, we become reactors, rather than actors, and always prefer that others take the initiative.

We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment--who will do almost anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to be abandoned emotionally. Yet we keep choosing insecure relationships because they match our childhood relationships with alcoholic parents. Thus, we see alcoholism as a family disease and ourselves as co-victims of the disease--as people who took on the characteristics of the disease in childhood. As children we learned to stuff our feelings and keep them buried as adults. As a consequence of this conditioning, we confuse love and pity. We tend to love those we can rescue and--even more self-defeating--we become addicted to excitement in all our affairs, preferring constant upsets to workable relationships.

This is a description, not an indictment.

## THE SOLUTION

The Solution is to become your own parent.

By attending these meetings on a regular basis, you will come to see parental alcoholism for what it is: a disease that infected you as a child and continues to affect you as an adult. When you accept the disease concept, you will see your parents and yourself as co-victims. You will learn to keep the focus on yourself in the here and now, and free yourself from the shame and the blame that are hangovers from the past. You will take responsibility for your own life and supply your own parenting.

You will not do all this alone. Look around you and you see other men and women who know exactly how you feel. We know where you're coming from because we've been there. We will love and support you no matter what. We want you to accept us as brothers and sisters just as we already accept you.

We look now on our biological parents as the instruments of our existence. Our actual parent is a Higher Power that we call God. God gave us life. And if God gave us alcoholic parents, God also gave us the Twelve Steps of Recovery.

We use the steps. We use the slogans. We use the telephone. And we share our experience, strength and hope with each other. This work enables us to heal our defects and sick thinking one day at a time. We release our parents from responsibility for our actions today and thus become free to make healthy decisions as actors, not reactors.

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