

COMMON FEELINGS AND BEHAVIORS OF ADULT CHILDREN

Research involving individuals who were raised in an addictive or dysfunctional family environment has determined that certain feelings and behaviors are common in Adult Children from these homes. Although the general population demonstrates many of these behaviors, individuals from dysfunctional families tend to have a high incidence of them. This exercise is intended to help identify the areas of your life in which these feelings and behaviors are evident.

We have feelings of low self-esteem as a result of being criticized. We perpetuate these parental messages by judging others and ourselves harshly. We try to cover up our poor opinions of ourselves by being perfectionistic, controlling, contemptuous and gossipy.

We tend to isolate ourselves out of fear and to feel uneasy around other people, especially authority figures.

We are desperate for love and approval and will do anything to make people like us. Not wanting to hurt others, we remain "loyal" in situations and relationships even when evidence indicates our loyalty is undeserved.

We are intimidated by angry people and personal criticism. This causes us to feel inadequate and insecure.

We continue to attract emotionally unavailable people with addictive personalities.

We live life as victims, blaming others for our circumstances, and are attracted to other victims as friends and lovers. We confuse love with pity and tend to "love" people we can pity and rescue.

We are either super-responsible or super-irresponsible. We take responsibility for solving others' problems or expect others to be responsible for solving ours. This enables us to avoid being responsible for our own lives and choices.

We feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves or act in our own best interest. We give in to others' needs and opinions instead of taking care of ourselves.

We deny, minimize or repress our feelings as a result of our traumatic childhoods. We are unaware of the impact that our inability to identify and express our feelings has had on our adult lives.

We are dependent personalities who are so terrified of rejection or abandonment that we tend to stay in situations or relationships that are harmful to us. Our fears and dependency stop us from ending unfulfilling relationships and prevent us from entering into fulfilling ones.

Denial, isolation, control, shame and inappropriate guilt are legacies from our family of origin. As a result of these symptoms, we feel hopeless and helpless.

We have difficulty with intimacy, security, trust and commitment in our relationships. Lacking clearly defined personal limits and boundaries, we become enmeshed in our partner's needs and emotions.

We tend to procrastinate and have difficulty following projects through from beginning to end. We have a strong need to be in control. We overreact to change over which we have no control.