

THE 13 CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT CHILDREN

by Dr. Janet G. Woititz

"Adult Children of Alcoholics" was originally written with only children of alcoholics in mind. Since its first publication, we have learned that the material discusses applies to other types of dysfunctional families as well. If you did not grow up with alcoholism but lived, for example, with other compulsive behaviours such as gambling, drug abuse or overeating, or you experienced chronic illness or profound religious attitudes, or you were adopted, lived in foster care or another potentially dysfunctional systems, you may find that you identify with the characteristics described here. It appears that much of what is true for the children of alcoholics is also true for others and that this understanding can help reduce the isolation of countless persons who also thought they were "different" because of their life experience.

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Adult Children of Alcoholics - The Expanded Edition

1. Adult children of alcoholics guess at what normal behaviour is.
2. Adult children of alcoholics have difficulty following a project through from beginning to end.
3. Adult children of alcoholics lie when it would be just as easy to tell the truth.
4. Adult children of alcoholics judge themselves without mercy.
5. Adult children of alcoholics have difficulty having fun.
6. Adult children of alcoholics take themselves very seriously.
7. Adult children of alcoholics have difficulty with intimate relationships.
8. Adult children of alcoholics overreact to changes over which they have no control.
9. Adult children of alcoholics constantly seek approval and affirmation.
10. Adult children of alcoholics usually feel that they are different from other people.
11. Adult children of alcoholics are super responsible or super irresponsible.
12. Adult children of alcoholics are extremely loyal, even in the face of evidence that the loyalty is undeserved.
13. Adult children of alcoholics are impulsive. They tend to lock themselves into a course of action without giving serious consideration to alternative behaviors or possible consequences. This impulsively leads to confusion, self-loathing and loss of control over their environment. In addition, they spend an excessive amount of energy cleaning up the mess.