13 Characteristics to Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA)

The following characteristics also applies to other types of dysfunctional families as well. You may be able to relate if you grew up with other compulsive behaviors such as gambling, drug abuse, over/under eating, chronic illness, profound religious attitudes, adoption/foster care and other potentially dysfunctional family systems.

1. Adult children of alcoholics guess at what normal behavior 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.

Adult Children of Alcoholics  
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