

## ACA INTRODUCTION

In ACA, we realize we could not have reacted another way given our dysfunctional upbringing. As children, we focused on the odd or neglectful nature of our parents' behavior. We mistakenly thought we caused their moods or attitudes or could do something to change circumstances. We did not realize that we were children and that adults were responsible for their own feelings and actions. Many of us thought we caused our parents' addiction... As children, we took responsibility for our parents' anger, rage, blame, or pitifulness... By living with a blaming or shaming parent, we developed a dependent, false self. Our false self constantly seeks outward affection, recognition, or praise, but we secretly believe we don't deserve it. Meanwhile, the Inner Child is driven inward into hiding.

Adult children intuitively link up with other adult children in relationships and social settings. As bizarre as it sounds, many adult children are attracted to an abusive, addicted person because that person resembles an addictive or abusive parent. Before recovery, many adult children tend to choose people who will abandon them so they can feel the familiar pain of being unwanted. We can also switch from feeling like a victim to reacting like a persecutor. Because we confuse love and pity and have an over-developed sense of responsibility, our abusive relationships fit with a subconscious set of traits we are looking for in a mate or significant other.

ACA works best for those abstaining from alcohol, (and) drugs... The disease of family dysfunction manifests itself in dependency, addiction, and dissociative personalities. The disease can kill. Every day adult children commit suicide, die in addiction, or die one day at a time in silent isolation, thinking they are hopeless. In ACA, we believe we were born whole and became fragmented in body, mind and spirit through abandonment and shame. We need help finding a way to return to our miracle state.