



“I won’t
make
the
same
mistakes”

LEGACY OF ADDICTION

If you grew up in a family with an addicted parent, you are a survivor. You found ways to cope with the secrets, the turmoil and the fear. You probably learned the three rules of living with addiction: Don't talk. Don't trust. Don't feel.

You may have vowed not to make the same mistakes with your own family. Yet you may be having problems with relationships, your marriage or raising your children. Perhaps you find yourself repeating the same patterns you learned as a child. Maybe you have over-compensated by imposing strict rules when there were none for you, or eliminating rules if you experienced nothing but discipline.

The behaviors that helped you survive as a child may be getting in the way of a full and rich adult life. You may want to examine whether those behaviors help or hinder you today.

“A lot of the negative behaviors I experienced with my father...”



“I have always been afraid of success and afraid of failing. I have become super responsible, a real high achiever.”

AUDREY, late 40's

Personal Legacies

Are you overly responsible or very irresponsible? Are you afraid of intimacy? Do you lie or exaggerate when it would be just as easy to tell the truth? Do you have trouble following a project through from the beginning to end? Do you judge yourself without mercy? Do you have difficulty letting go and having fun? Are you constantly seeking approval and affirmation? Are you extremely loyal even when evidence indicates the loyalty is undeserved? Do you over-react to changes over which you have no control? Do you hate holidays?

Many people will be able to answer “yes” to some of these questions. Anyone who has grown up with chronic stress in the family will possess some of these characteristics. These traits can also be passed along from one generation to the next. Children learn by example, and will often adopt the behavior patterns of their parents.

repeated themselves in the way I dealt with my children.

Parenting Issues

People who have grown up in addicted families tend to experience difficulties in two main areas of life: parenting and relationships. In parenting, there may be trouble with discipline – in setting “bottom lines”. You may not want to make your parent’s mistakes, but you may not know how



to do things differently. You may be striving for perfection and your expectations may be too high. The result can be frustration, self-doubt and disappointment.

“I was looking for a rule book for life, for my kids. I was looking for a rule book on parenting.”

BRENDA, late 20's

Relationship Issues

Often grown children of addicted parents choose partners with similar backgrounds or addictions. Sometimes it's because the partner seems familiar or “comfortable”. Sometimes it's because of the past relationship between parent and child. If the child took care of the parent, he or she may be looking for a partner who is just as needy.

I did not like that at all.”

JEFF, early 30's



“I think the biggest effect ... of having an emotionally unavailable father is that I get myself into relationships with emotionally unavailable men.”

BETH, late 20's

If you grew up with addiction in your family, help is available from the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. We have the programs, the people and the resources to help you understand your situation. By learning to talk, to trust and to feel, you can learn to make healthy choices and changes in your life.

Above all, you can break the pattern. You can learn how not to make the same mistakes.



**“Today I know I deserve a lot more.
That gives me a lot of hope.”**

KAREN, early 30's

For more information, or for someone to talk to, call the local office of the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba or a regional office listed in this brochure.

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Leading the way to an addiction free society.



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