ACA List of Characteristics (Tony A. Laundry List)

Below is the version of the "Laundry List" that was in general circulation within ACA/ACoA meetings in 1990, when *12-Steps to Freedom* was first published. We include it here for historical reference purposes. ACA WSO has since modified (shortened) this list and Tony A., its original author, wrote a book, *The Laundry List,* (1991) revising it to its present fourteen characteristics. Compare this list to the text from 1990.) Groups can add or modify these lists!:

Adult Children seem to have several characteristics in common as a result of having been brought up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional family system. If you identify with some of these characteristics and want to change, the ACA/ACoA/(ACE) program is available.

1. We become isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.
2. We become approval seekers and lose our identity in the process.
3. We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.
4. We either become alcoholics, marry them, or both, or find another "compulsive personality" to fulfill our sick abandonment needs.
5. We live life from the standpoint of victims and are attracted by that weaknessin our love, friendship, and career relationships.
6. We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility, and it is easier for us to be concerned with others rather than ourselves; this enables us not to look too closelyat our faults or responsibility to ourselves.
7. We get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.
8. We are addicted to excitement.
9. We confuse love with pity and tend to " love" those we can rescue.
10. We have stuffed our feelings from our traumatic childhoods and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts so much. This includes our good feelings such as joy and happiness. Our being out of touch with our feelings isone of our basic denials.
11. We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem.
12. We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment.
13. We will doanything to hold onto a relationship in order not to experience painful abandonment feelings which are associated with having grown up living with sick people who were never there for us.
14. Alcoholism is a family disease, and we became para-alcoholics and took on the characteristics of that disease even though we did not pick up the drink.

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15. We are reactors rather than actors.
16. We guess at what normal is.
17. We have difficulty following a project through from beginning to end.
18. We have difficulty having fun.
19. We have difficulty with intimate relationships.
20. We take ourselves very seriously.
21. We overreact to changes over which we have no control.
22. We usually feel different from other people.
23. We are extremely loyal even in the face of evidence that the loyalty is undeserved.
24. We tend to lock ourselves into a course of action without giving serious consideration to alternative behaviors or possible consequences. This impulsivity leads to confusion, self-loathing, and loss of control of our environment. As a result, we spend more energy cleaning up the mess than we would have spent had the alternatives and consequences been examined in the first place.
25. We tend to look for immediate rather than deferred gratification.
26. We generally overreact out of fear.
27. We are either super responsible or super irresponsible.

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