

13 Characteristics of Men of Dysfunctional Homes

Families, churches and employers increasingly have to cope with the downstream impact of angry young men who grew up in dysfunctional homes.

And some of these men are not so young anymore. A first step to disciple a man who grew up in a dysfunctional home is to understand what such a home can do to a person.

In the groundbreaking book, *Adult Children of Alcoholics*, author Janet Woititz found a common set of 13 characteristics among adults who grew up in alcoholic homes. But these characteristics have also been found to have a much broader application, like other compulsive behaviors (gambling and overeating), extreme religious attitudes, toxic homes, abusive homes, and dysfunctional foster homes. According to Woititz, adults who grew up in such homes:

1. Have to guess at what is normal behavior.
2. Have difficulty following a project through from beginning to end.
3. Lie when it would be just as easy to tell the truth.
4. Judge themselves without mercy.
5. Find it difficult to have fun.
6. Take themselves very seriously.
7. Have difficulty with intimate relationships.
8. Over-react to changes they don't control.
9. Constantly seek approval and affirmation.

10. Feel like they're different from other people.
11. Are super responsible or super irresponsible.
12. Are extremely loyal, even if it's obvious the loyalty is undeserved.
13. Are impulsive.

If you truly have a man who grew up in a dysfunctional home, or if you are that man, normal discipleship may not be enough. Sometimes a professional Christian counselor or recovery group can help a man toward self-understanding and healing in a way that an untrained layman just can't provide. The only way to find out is to give it a try. I went to a counselor and found five sessions turned my world around.

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