

The Devastating Effects of Alcoholism Through a Child's Eyes

When I found her body, I was 34 years old. She had been off the grid too long, and I knew something wasn't right.

The lights were all off. The doors were locked, and I had no working key. The policeman standing beside me couldn't legally break in because he had no cause. He handed me the tool he used to smash windows and said, "You didn't get that from me."

I broke in through a side window. Glass shattered on the floor as I climbed in. Thinking to myself, *She's going to kill me if I'm not right.*

I walked very slowly through her condo with a terrible sense of dread calling out her name with no reply. The last space was her bedroom. She had to be there. I hesitated with fear, but also a sense of finality. It was almost over. There she was. It was the last imagery to forever be burned into the memory of her child. Alcohol won.

I was 12 years old when I fully realized what was going on. From then on, my own life became tangled up with the addiction of my parent. While each case is unique, there are three common effects of alcoholism in children of alcoholics.

Gripping Fear

I was very close to my mom as a young boy. She was a tremendous person. Alcohol wasn't part of her life. She was beautiful, fun, intelligent, hardworking, ambitious and church-going. Those qualities evaporated when she started drinking and were reduced to only glimpses.

It terrified me as both a boy and young adult. I was afraid of

divorce (that later came) and for her safety and the toll it took on my dad, and my own security felt like I was in quicksand. I knew by 16 years old that my mom was going to die tragically. It filled me with fear.

Reckless Behavior

As a child, I was unable to process what was happening, so I stopped caring, not about other people but about what happened to me. I stopped studying in school, started smoking and I started drinking.

When I got a car at 16, I used it as my escape tool but in dangerous ways. I received more citations between 16 and 18 than most people get their entire lives. I just didn't care. Nobody stopped me, not my parents or school. The addiction and its ramifications always won.

Feeling Unworthy

Children aren't stupid. They know that the addiction of the parent always comes first. The consequences of that are devastating. If your own parent doesn't love you more than alcohol, then how could anyone else ever care?

This creates a feeling of complete unworthiness of love and success. It will affect everything they go on to do in life. Their relationships, their careers and their own parenting will be impacted; they enter a cycle of self-sabotage. {eoa}

Special Note: Personally, I was able to find healing in my faith in God. He has given me purpose to break the cycle of addiction and brokenness in our family. The death of my mom was a crossroads for me. To the readers of this article struggling with addiction or as a victim of it, there is a path to recovery. Seek it today.

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