

It's a Family Affair



The alcoholic and/or drug-addicted family provides the perfect arena for dysfunction. *Normal*, for many of us, is the elephant sitting in the room. Denial ruled the family unit and commands that no one talk, feel, or trust others about what happens behind our closed doors.

Although the elephant is imaginary, our dysfunctions are real.

Many of us felt abnormal loyalty to parents we sought validation from. When validation didn't come, we isolated. Too afraid of other kids and adults, we preferred to be alone. Some of us were troublemakers in school, seeking attention any way we could. Others became teachers' pets, carrying the mask of denial wherever we went.

Under the spell of addiction, many mothers were overachievers or, just the opposite, strung out and depressed, neglecting everyone and everything. Anger, domestic violence, child abuse, or neglect often dominated the home, producing fear and a pervasive sense of helplessness for everyone involved.

Fathers carried their burden in active addiction. Oftentimes they were a portrait of complete disappointment and rigidity, or a master of forgiveness when sober. "If only you..." or "This is your fault!" filled the room as family members tried to detach from his or her disappointments.

In a family of addiction, no one wins. Everyone is affected. Sometimes the father admits he doesn't want his wife to sober up because he loses the control he once enjoyed. The mother often wrestles with contempt after the father recovers. His preoccupation shifts to the fellowship of recovery and helping others. He's still not around, and he's still not available.

The family may require months or years to heal. Professional help, sobriety, and a never-ending willingness to succeed together are the requirements necessary to change family dynamics in the home. And it happens every day, all around the world.

TODAY'S MEDITATION

Watching an entire family recover and regain harmony and trust is a miracle beyond measure that can only be granted by the grace of God.

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"God can restore what is broken and change it into something amazing.

All you need is faith."—Joel 2:25

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