

Mother's Ruin

Reflections and advice on life with an alcoholic parent

SYNOPSIS

Are you a young adult who has an alcoholic parent or carer in your life? Are you struggling with the challenges of the emotions? I bet that most days you feel like no one understands. You are not alone.

Mother's Ruin has been written just for you. This handbook demystifies the pain and trauma that comes with the life of being a child of an alcoholic, and rather than focus on the negative elements, is intended to offer a glimmer of hope to you.

The statistics for children of alcoholics are not pleasant to read. We're most at risk of developing our own alcohol or substance addictions. We're more likely to suffer from some sort of mental illness - be it depression or eating disorders. We are less likely to be able to enter into positive relationships - in fact there is a high chance we choose a life partner with an addiction. The odds are against us.

But they don't have to be. We can choose to take control of our lives by being informed and aware of what we have and are experiencing, so that we can make better judgements, decisions and become true survivors.

The book is broken into two parts.

Part One: THE FEELINGS considers your emotions, ones that are completely natural. This is your chance to better understand and control your feelings, whether it is confusion, shame, secrecy, guilt, anger or anxiety. It explains why you may be keen to escape your situation, or have the need to always be a perfectionist. It considers the

emotions of consequence: the uncertainty of having an alcoholic in your life, and the inevitable grief of all that could have been - and isn't.

What you feel, you can heal.

Part Two: THE FUTURE focuses on how you WILL survive and thrive through this: how you are going to accept the situation, find your own self-love and passion, and be grateful for what you do have. It looks at the importance of addressing truth in your everyday life, finding a community, and how to go into adulthood as someone who has overcome the challenges you have faced. There are also plenty of suggestions of where you can go for support to get through the current challenging times.

Unlike many books aimed at young adults of alcoholics, there is no request for you to look to a higher power, or involve yourself in the responsibility of solving your parent's addiction. It is about YOU, and gives simple suggestions that you can take or leave as you wish. It is brimming with inputs from expert therapists and adult children of alcoholics - including the author - who share personal experiences and stories that you might find surprisingly familiar.

This book is 100% teenage friendly, and while focused especially on those who have an alcoholic parent or carer, it is also suitable for friends who wish to offer smart support, and for school counsellors and psychotherapists.

About the Author: Jen Marsden



Jen Marsden was born and raised in the UK. Although she has no PhD in psychotherapy or psychiatry, Jen has a unique perspective in being able to write *Mother's Ruin*: her own mother was a severe alcoholic throughout her childhood.

Her mum eventually died of chronic liver disease in 2016 caused by her struggle with alcoholism.

Jen has undergone years of psychotherapy and comes out the other side, a stronger, successful and a hugely grateful woman of the world.

"I wished I had been given a book that would have helped me when I was a young adult handling the challenges of living with an alcoholic parent, and the inevitable day to day fallouts and shattering of hope. I am confident that this book fills a major gap in the consumer book market and provides a candid look at emotions, actions and reactions."

Jen decided to write the book herself to help young people, and candidly shares her personal experience and survival tips to prove that it does get better. Today, Jen is in her thirties, lives in India and is a successful and award winning writer, author and communications strategist.

CHAPTER PLAN

Foreword

Dedication

Introduction

PART 1 THE FEELINGS

1. Confusion

Why there is confusion, both from the perspective as a young adult in not understanding why this is happening or how it is happening, and also why our alcoholic parent is often confused as we explain the basic science of alcoholism.

2. Shame

Why we feel ashamed for our parent's actions, even when it is not our fault and why it becomes a personal emotion.

3. Secrecy

Why we hide the problems of our family, and why we don't - and both the positive and negative results of telling people what's going on at home.

4. Escapism

Why we may sometimes just want to escape, or go into our own fantasy lands, and why this is normal behaviour and helps us to cope, up to a point.

5. Jealousy

Why we may feel jealous towards friends and their parent and family dynamics and how to handle it. Also why our alcoholic parent/carer may show signs of jealousy towards us.

6. Guilt

Why we will always feel guilty. That we're not good enough, that we haven't done enough to prevent our parent's drinking, that we have caused it, that we have behaved badly in reaction to it. Why guilt is normal, and how to manage the emotion.

7. Fear

Why we often feel real fear, understanding our reaction to it, and why it's understandable to feel afraid, and how to manage this feeling.

8. Rejection

Why we will feel unloved, that our parents would not drink if they really loved us, and how that is just a myth.

9. Perfection

Why we always feel the need to be perfect and how to overcome it.

10. Anxiety

Why anxiety shows its face, from having low self esteem to full on anxiety attacks - and how to handle both.

11. Depression

Why it is normal to feel depressed, what it is, and top tips to get around it.

12. Anger

Why we feel anger at our situation and may act out our frustration in negative situations. How to avoid anger building up and realign it into a positive action.

13. Consequences

Why there are natural consequences that will follow, one way or another. How to handle all the scenarios - whether it is from staying in touch or excommunicating your alcoholic parent, to seeing them become sober, to seeing them self-destruct.

14. Grief

Why grief can be a natural emotion even if no one has died, and why we can be sad for lost opportunities. Why grief is complicated if our alcoholic parent passes away.

PART 2 THE FUTURE

15. Acceptance

How we learn to accept the fact that this problem is not going away, and that we are not responsible for the alcoholic parent or carer in our lives. How we also learn to accept ourselves and forgive.

16. Truth

How we honour truth, and consider when is the right time to be honest about the situation we face, and when it is not. How we share our truth with dignity and integrity.

17. Love

How we can learn to love ourselves, and feel deserving of others love. How we can identify what is real and healthy love, and what is not.

18. Passion

How to find our passion in our lives and harness it for good, happy emotions.

19. Hope

How to hang on to hope, even when we don't believe it's worth doing.

20. Gratitude

How to learn to become grateful for the little, often small things in our life, and appreciate what we do have, not what we do not.

21. Community

How to find our own people and mentors that can help us through life, and how to learn to trust, and identify the right people to support us.

22. Adulthood

How to parent our inner child as we move into adulthood, and how to feel "normal" in a world that actually isn't.

23. Support

Where to go for extra support at the most difficult times. This section will also be updated at the website Mothersruin.com, which intends to be an anonymous but welcoming and non-judgemental community for those who wish to share their stories and support each other.

WORD COUNT

Approx. number of words: 50,000

MOTHER'S RUIN vs. THE COMPETITION

This book is unique. It is hard to even say it has competition!

Yes, there are 39 similar books on the topic of alcoholics and the impact on children of families. See the full list in the table overleaf, however this book looks at alcoholism from an entirely new perspective.

Most books are related to an affiliated organisation or have religious sentiments.

Many are related to the worldwide Al-Anon organisation (4), have a religious connection (1), or are part of the global Adult Children of Alcoholics worldwide organisation (4). This book is non-affiliated, non-presumptuous and suitable for all faiths.

Most books talk to adults and health professionals.

There are 1.4 million people dependent on alcohol, which generally affects five other people, according to government statistics. This also includes the young. This book uniquely speaks to young adults and teenagers without a condescending manner or an expectation to join an organisation. It allows them to take control of their own understanding of their alcoholic parent or carer, while giving them useful coping mechanisms and life skills, focused on their emotional wellbeing. The NHS highlights that alcohol dependence begins between 18 - 24 years, and with genetic influence, it is important to highlight risks with children of alcoholics early on.

Most books are really out of date.

Can we really trust books that are a minimum of 15 years old? The majority of current books on the topic of alcoholism and families were written around the late 1980s and 1990s. Just two books were written / revised in 2016 and one in 2017. Psychology has moved on leaps and bounds since then, and today's counselling is far more about acknowledging emotions than focusing on solutions. Many earlier books are also aimed at the US market, whereas this book intends to be UK focused, as well as suitable for the global market.

Most books pretend that alcoholism can be solved

With titles such as *"More Than Hope: A Guide to Interventions for Friends and Families of Addicts and Alcoholics"* and *"It Takes A Family: A Cooperative Approach to Lasting Sobriety"*,

there is a major focus on the family taking responsibility for the issues of the alcoholic. This is an element of guilt-mongering for young adults - it is NOT their responsibility. Secondly, it addresses the real situation: while there are success stories of recovered alcoholics, 33,000 people in the UK die from alcohol related causes, according to government statistics.

BOOKS ON ALCOHOLICS & FAMILIES

Name of Book	Author	Year of Publication
An Elephant In the Living Room The Children's Book	Jill M. Hastings, Marion H. Typpo	1994
Perfect Daughters: Adult Daughters of Alcoholics	Robert Ackerman	1992
Living with a Functioning Alcoholic: A Woman's Survival Guide Paperback	Neill Neill	2008
The Glass Castle: A Memoir	Jeannette Walls	2006
Courage to Change: One Day at a Time	Al-Anon Family Group Head Inc	1992
After the Tears: Helping Adult Children of Alcoholics Heal Their Childhood Trauma	Jane Middleton-Moz, Lorie Dwinell	2010
Alcoholism and the Family: A Guide to Treatment and Prevention — Second Edition	Ann W. Lawson, Gary Lawson	2004
Alateen: Hope for Children of Alcoholics	Al-Anon Family Group Head Inc	1973
Adult Children of Alcoholics Syndrome: A Step By Step Guide To Discovery And Recovery	Wayne Kraitsberg	1988
It Will Never Happen to Me! Children of Alcoholics: As Youngsters - Adolescents - Adults	Claudia Black	1987
Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families Tenth Anniversary Edition	ACA WSO	2016
An Adult Child's Guide to What's 'Normal'	John Friel, Linda D. Friel	1990
Families Under the Influence: Changing Alcoholic Patterns	Michael Elkin	1984
Understanding Alcoholism as a Brain Disease (Rethinking Drinking Book 2)	Linda Burlison	unknown
The Alcoholic Family	Peter Steinglass	1987
From Survival to Recovery: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Home	Al-Anon Family Group Head Inc	1994
Alcoholics: 3 Books Combined on Dealing With an Alcoholic Family Member, Friend or Someone You Love	JC Anonymous	unknown
Twelve Steps of Adult Children Steps Workbook	Adult Children Of Alcoholics World Service Organization	2007
Christian Families in Recovery: A guide for addiction, recovery & intervention using God's tools of redemption	Robert and Stephanie Tucker	2014
Another Chance: Hope and Health for the Alcoholic Family (2nd Revised edition)	Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse	1988
More Than Hope: A Guide to Interventions for Friends and Families of Addicts and Alcoholics (Volume 1)	Steve Bruno	2017
The Opposite of Everything Is True: Reflections on Denial in Alcoholic Families	William H. Crisman	1991
It Takes A Family: A Cooperative Approach to Lasting Sobriety Paperback	Debra Jay	2014
The ACOA Trauma Syndrome: The Impact of Childhood Pain on Adult Relationships	Tian Dayton PhD	2012
Healing The Child Within: Discovery and Recovery for Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families	Charles L. Whitfield M.D.	1987
Becoming Your Own Parent: The Solution for Adult Children of Alcoholic and Other Dysfunctional Families	Dennis Wholey	1988
Alcoholics and Their Families: A Guide for Clergy and Congregations	John E. Keller	1991
Help! I Think My Loved One Is an Alcoholic: A Survival Guide for Lovers, Family, and Friends	Michelle Fondin	kindle

Adult Children of Alcoholics	Janet G. Woititz	1980
Adult Children: Alcoholic / Dysfunctional Families	ACA WSO	2006
How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics	Al-Anon Family Groups	2008
Everything Changes: Help for Families of Newly Recovering Addicts	Beverly Conyers	2009
Adult Children Secrets of Dysfunctional Families: The Secrets of Dysfunctional Families	John C. Friel Ph.D., Linda D. Friel M.A.	1990
Daily Affirmations Strengthening My Recovery Meditations for Adult Children of Alcoholics / Dysfunctional Families	ACA WSO	2013
Addict In The Family: Stories of Loss, Hope, and Recovery	Beverly Conyers	2003
The Alcoholic Family in Recovery: A Developmental Model	Stephanie Brown PhD & 3 more	2002
Addict in the House: A No-Nonsense Family Guide Through Addiction and Recovery	Robin Barnett EdD LCSW	2016
A Child Called It: One Child's Courage to Survive	Dave Pelzer	1995
It Will Never Happen to Me	Claudia Black	1982
Safe Passage: Recovery for Adult Children of Alcoholics	Stephanie Brown	1992
A Place Called Self: Women, Sobriety and Radical Transformation	Stephanie Brown	2004

Books on Alcoholism & Families

