



Adult Children of Abusive Parents: A Healing Program for Those Who Have Been Physically, Sexually, or Emotionally Abused

Steven Farmer

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This groundbreaking book, first issued in 1990, continues to offer hope, healing, and guidance for recovering from childhood abuse. In the intervening years, there has been increasing awareness of childhood abuse and the lingering effects that are carried over into adulthood. While the instinctual and adaptive survival responses to such treatment worked well enough to enable you to get through childhood, as an adult you're no doubt finding how problematic some of these thoughts, feelings, and behaviors can be.

Whether the abuse was physical, sexual, emotional, or consistent neglect, there was always a component of emotional abuse that left invisible scars. Although emotional abuse is in a category by itself, it is also a component of any other kind of abuse. Some of the challenges for adults abused as children include the inability to feel or trust, relationship problems (including difficulty with intimacy), depression, eating disorders, and alcohol or drug abuse.

A history of childhood abuse is not a life sentence. As adults, we still have the tremendous strength and resourcefulness that got us through those early years and these assets can now be put to use in discovering the creative, innocent, spontaneous individuals we once were—once we can identify what went wrong and start an intentional and active recovery program.

In the ensuing years, there has been a considerable amount of information about these effects and how they can be healed. The diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), initially ascribed to soldiers returning from WWII, has become a way of understanding how remarkably adaptive we can be when faced with overwhelming experiences, particularly as vulnerable children. Congruently there has surfaced a number of treatment modalities that offer great promise for recovering from the wounds of childhood.

Drawing on his extensive work as a former psychotherapist, Dr. Steven Farmer details what it's like to have grown up in a dysfunctional family where there were consistent patterns of physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and/or neglect. Some of the characteristics, such as lack of boundaries, chaos, denial, and rigid role-playing common to such families help you identify those experiences that have been too painful to admit.

Once you have become aware of some of the traits of an abusive family, Dr. Farmer shows you ways to discover and nurture your natural self. Through the use of exercises and journal work, his program leads you through grieving your lost childhood, becoming your own parent, growing up again, and integrating the healings aspects of spiritual, physical, and emotional recovery into your adult life.

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