

A Daily Reminder:

Am I Living in Emotional Intoxication or Emotional Sobriety Today?

Emotional Intoxication

aka Para-Alcoholism.

Para-alcoholism represents the mannerisms and behaviors we developed by living with an alcoholic or dysfunctional parent. As children, we took on the fear and denial of the alcoholic or nondrinking parent without taking a drink.

Emotional intoxication can be characterized by **obsession** and **unhealthy dependence**. There also can be compulsion. Even without drugs and alcohol, we can be “**drunk**” on **fear, excitement or pain**. We can also be drunk on **arguing, gossip, or self-imposed isolation**.

In essence the **Laundry List**, the 14 traits of an adult child, offers a textbook example of the behaviors and attitudes that characterize an **emotionally intoxicated person**. We fear authority figures and judge ourselves harshly while being terrified of abandonment. Without help, we seek out others to **reenact** our family dynamics. We can **recreate** our family dysfunction at home and on the job indefinitely until we find ACA. This means that our adult relationships resemble the **template relationship** we developed as children to survive an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional home. We find others to create **chaos, conflict, or unsafe relationships**.

Emotional Sobriety

Emotional sobriety involves a **changed relationship** with self and others. We measure emotional sobriety by the level of **honesty, mutual respect, and the acceptability of feelings** in our relationships. If our relationships are still manipulative and controlling, we are not **emotionally sober** no matter what we tell ourselves about our recovery program. Emotional sobriety means that we are involved in changed relationships that are **safe and honest**. We feel a nearness to our **Higher Power**. We cultivate emotional sobriety through the **Twelve Steps** and through association with other recovering adult children.

Emotional sobriety was formally introduced to the ACA fellowship through the Identity Papers. The 1986 paper, “**Finding Wholeness Through Separation: The Paradox of Independence**,” shows the genesis of emotional sobriety. The possibility of emotional sobriety is **created** through the broadening and deepening of the **Steps and Traditions**.