

## Answers, Approaches and Strategies often Used to Protect the Parents (and thus Block Healing)

| Category   | Frequently Heard   |
|--|--|
| 1) Outright denial   | "My childhood was fine."   |
| 2) Appeasing; "Yes, but . . .",<br>detaching from the feelings | "It happened but . . . they (my<br>parents) did their best."   |
| 3) Viewing pain of the trauma as a<br>fantasy                  | "It really didn't happen that<br>way."   |
| 4) Fourth Commandment  | "God will be angry at me. It<br>just isn't right."   |
| 5) Unconscious fear of rejection                               | "If I express my rage, they<br>won't love me."   |
| 6) Fear of the unknown   | "Something really bad will hap-<br>pen. I might hurt someone, or<br>they might hurt me."                     |
| 7) Accepting the blame   | "I'm the bad one."   |
| 8) Forgiving the parents                                       | "I'll just forgive them" or "I've<br>already forgiven them."   |
| 9) Attacking the person who<br>suggests doing recovery work    | "You're bad for suggesting that<br>I express my hurt and rage or<br>that my parents could have<br>been bad." |

## Negative Rules and Negative Messages Com- monly Heard in Alcoholic or Other Troubled Families

| Negative Rules   | Negative Messages                       |
|--|---|
| Don't express your feelings  | Shame on you                            |
| Don't get angry  | You're not good enough                  |
| Don't get upset  | I wish I'd never had you                |
| Don't cry  | Your needs are not all right<br>with me |
| Do as I say, not as I do   | Hurry up and grow up                    |
| Be good, "nice," perfect   | Be dependent                            |
| Avoid conflict (or avoid dealing<br>with conflict)                           | Be a man                                |
| Don't think or talk; just follow<br>directions                               | Big boys don't cry                      |
| Do well in school  | Act like a nice girl (or a lady)        |
| Don't ask questions  | You don't feel that way                 |
| Don't betray the family  | Don't be like that                      |
| Don't discuss the family with out-<br>siders; keep the family secret         | You're so stupid (or bad, etc.)         |
| Be seen and not heard!   | You caused it                           |
| No back talk   | You owe it to us                        |
| Don't contradict me  | Of course we love you!                  |
| Always look good   | I'm sacrificing myself for you          |
| I'm always right, you're always<br>wrong                                     | How can you do this to me?              |
| Always be in control   | We won't love you if you . . .          |
| Focus on the alcoholic's drinking<br>(or troubled person's behavior)         | You're driving me crazy!                |
| Drinking (or other troubled<br>behavior) is not the cause of our<br>problems | You'll never accomplish anything        |
| Always maintain the status quo   | It didn't really hurt                   |
| Everyone in the family must be an<br>enabler                                 | You're so selfish                       |
|  | You'll be the death of me yet           |
|  | That's not true                         |
|  | I promise (though breaks it)            |
|  | You make me sick!                       |
|  | You're so stupid                        |
|  | We wanted a boy/girl                    |
|  | You _____                               |

**Martyr/Victim Cycle**

False self  
 Self-contraction  
 There and then  
 Unfinished business  
 Few personal rights  
 Stagnation, regression  
 Sharing little  
 Same story  
 Repetition compulsion  
 Impulsive and compulsive  
 Most is unconscious  
 Unaware stuckness

**Hero/Heroine's Journey**

True Self  
 Self-expansion  
 Here and now  
 Finished and finishing business  
 Many personal rights  
 Growth  
 Sharing as appropriate  
 Growing story  
 Telling our story  
 Spontaneous and flowing  
 Much is conscious  
 Progressively aware becoming and being

Unfocused

Focused

Not working a recovery program

Working a recovery program

Less open to input from others

Open to input from safe others

Varying degrees of "dry drunk"

Working through pain and appreciating joy

Doing it "on my own"

Co-creatorship

Often grandiose

Humble yet confident

Fewer possibilities and choices

More possibilities and choices

"Unhappy dream"

"Happy dream" (A Course in Miracles)

Excludes Higher Power

Includes Higher Power

Illness

Health

Curse

Gift

