

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 . . .", detaching from the feelings	"It happened but . . . they (my parents) did their best."
3) Viewing pain of the trauma as a fantasy	"It really didn't happen that way."
4) Fourth Commandment	"God will be angry at me. It just isn't right."
5) Unconscious fear of rejection	"If I express my rage, they won't love me."
6) Fear of the unknown	"Something really bad will hap- pen. I might hurt someone, or 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 already forgiven them."
9) Attacking the person who suggests doing recovery work	"You're bad for suggesting that I express my hurt and rage or that my parents could have 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 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 with conflict)	Be a man
Don't think or talk; just follow 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- 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 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 (or troubled person's behavior)	You're driving me crazy!
Drinking (or other troubled behavior) is not the cause of our problems	You'll never accomplish anything
Always maintain the status quo	It didn't really hurt
Everyone in the family must be an 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

Unfocused
Not working a recovery program
Less open to input from others
Varying degrees of "dry drunk"

Doing it "on my own"
Often grandiose
Fewer possibilities and choices
"Unhappy dream"

Excludes Higher Power
Illness
Curse

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

Focused
Working a recovery program
Open to input from safe others
Working through pain and appreciating joy

Co-creatorship
Humble yet confident
More possibilities and choices
"Happy dream" (A Course in Miracles)

Includes Higher Power
Health
Gift

