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# 7 Truths to Start Your Healing Journey as an Adult Child of an Alcoholic

By Jody Lamb



# You Are Not Alone

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Let's talk about you for a minute, shall we? If you're reading this, you likely grew up in an environment shaped by addiction. Maybe you always felt different. Maybe you're struggling with anxiety, self-doubt, or unhealthy patterns in your relationships. Maybe you feel stuck. Maybe you want something more of life than you currently have.

Well, we have a lot in common. I, too, felt like this. I want you to know three things right now:

1. You are normal.
2. You are not alone.
3. You can heal and create the life you want.

For most of my life, I thought I was broken. But I wasn't. I was simply reacting the way any child would in a home with addiction. The moment I started learning and healing, everything changed.

This guide shares seven truths that will help you begin your healing journey as an adult child of an alcoholic (ACoA). These are the lessons that changed my life. They can change yours, too.

For the last 16 years, I've been healing from tough experiences, reprogramming my brain, and creating the life I want. It is a journey, but I am living in a way that I could not have imagined a few decades ago. Let's pretend you just grabbed a cup of coffee, pulled up a chair, and asked, "So, what have you learned?"

# Truth #1: You're Normal

For years, I thought I was the only person dealing with the destructive effects of my mother's substance use disorder. Then I attended my first Al-Anon meeting. As I listened to strangers describe their experiences, I realized I wasn't alone. Their stories were *my* story.

Here's the truth:

- Addiction is extremely common. One in four kids grows up in a home affected by alcohol abuse.
- Many ACoAs share the same struggles: perfectionism, trust woes, anxiety, people-pleasing, and difficulty setting boundaries – among many others!
- You are not broken. You are reacting to what happened to you.

When you realize you are not alone and not damaged, you can start to heal.

➔ **Reflection:** Think about the people in your life. How many of them might have grown up with dysfunction, too? You are not as different as you think.







## Truth #2: You Caused Nothing

As kids, we believe our parents' actions are our fault. I spent years thinking:

- *If I had been a better daughter, maybe Mom would have stopped drinking.*
- *If I had done more, maybe I could have saved my family from all that chaos.*

### **This was a lie.**

- Addiction is a disease.
- You did not cause it and you could not have stopped it.
- Your worth is not measured by what happened in your home.

When I accepted this truth, I felt a weight lift off my shoulders. I wasn't responsible for my mother's addiction. I wasn't responsible for fixing it or cleaning up all the messes. In fact, my only job is to take good care of *me*. That's it.

➔ **Action Step:** Write down these sentences and repeat them every time guilt creeps in:

- I did not cause my parent's addiction.
- I am not responsible for their choices.
- My job is to take good care of me.



## Truth #3: You Are One Decision Away From a New Life

I used to believe that my life was out of my control. I waited for my mom to get sober because that meant we could all start living again. I waited for the pain and constant worry to go away. But nothing changed until I did.

Healing began when I made one small decision to do something for myself. I attended Al-Anon support group meetings. I signed up for a creative writing class. Those decisions led to new friendships, a rekindled passion for writing, and eventually, a published book.

You don't have to overhaul your life overnight. **You just need to take one step in a healthier direction.**

➡ **Action Step:** What's one small thing you can do for yourself today?

Go to an Al-Anon meeting? Take a walk? Journal? Sign up for therapy? Take the first step.



## Truth #4: You Hold the Pen

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Growing up and as a young adult, it felt like my life was written for me:

- Be the responsible one.
- Take care of everyone else.
- Ignore your own needs.

But here's the truth: You are the author of your life now.

- You get to decide what healing looks like for you.
- You get to choose the relationships, habits, and beliefs that serve you.
- You get to rewrite your story.



➡ **Reflection:** Imagine your life five years from now.

What do you want it to look like? Write it down.

This is your new story. It's one where you come first.

# Truth #5: Your Brain Is Ready to Be Reprogrammed

As ACoAs, our brains were wired for survival. We learned to:

- Expect chaos.
- Put others' needs before our own.
- Avoid conflict at all costs.

But survival mode isn't living; it's existing. The good news? Your brain can be reprogrammed.

Here's how:

- Identify unhealthy patterns. (Example: People-pleasing, over-apologizing, avoiding emotions)
- Challenge negative thoughts.
- Replace them with healthy habits. (Setting boundaries, self-care, seeking support through therapy and support groups)

➔ **Action Step:** What's one unhealthy belief or habit you want to change? Write it down and then brainstorm a healthier replacement.







## Truth #6: Little-Kid You Deserves This

My therapist once asked me: “Would you treat eight-year-old Jody the way you treat yourself now?”

That question hit me hard. I was constantly criticizing myself. I pushed myself to exhaustion. I ignored my own needs.

Would I do that to a child? Never.

Your inner child is still with you. They deserve love, patience, and care. They deserve to heal.

➡ **Action Step:** Find a childhood photo of yourself. Place it somewhere you’ll see it every day.

When you’re struggling, ask: *What would little-kid me need right now?*

# Truth #7: Your Only Job in Life Is to Take Care of You

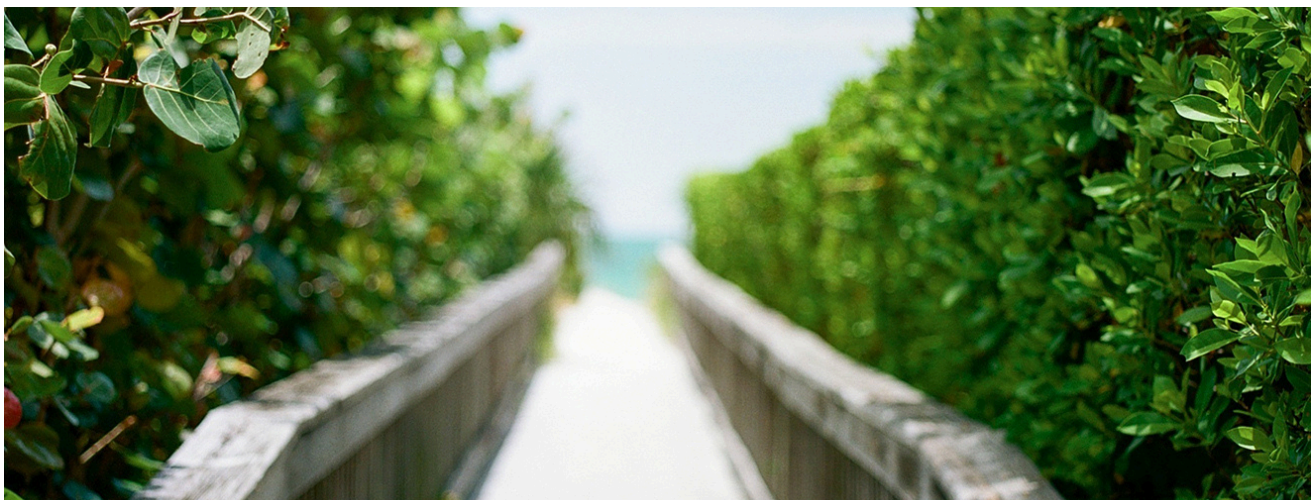
For years, I thought my job was to fix my mom, protect my sister, and hold my family together. I was wrong.

Your only job in life is to take care of you.

- Not your parents.
- Not your siblings.
- Not anyone else (well, you're responsible for your children if you are a parent 😊)

You cannot heal anyone else but you can heal yourself. When you do, you create a better life not just for you, but for everyone around you.

➡ **Reflection:** What does "taking care of yourself" look like for you? How will you commit to it today?



# ***Let's heal together***

**Your healing journey starts now**



These seven truths changed my life. They will change yours, too. Healing is a journey, not a destination. There will be setbacks. There will be hard days.

But you are already on your way.

You deserve peace. You deserve joy. You deserve to heal. You deserve a life you love.

Next Steps:

✉ Get free resources, tips, and encouragement in my newsletter.

💡 Explore more at [JodyLamb.com](https://JodyLamb.com).

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**You are not alone. You are capable of healing and creating a life you love. I'm rooting for you. ❤️**

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