



Hope for the Wife of the Alcoholic:: A Guide for Therapists and the Wives They Work With

Larry Wall DCSW

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There are two central freedoms the wife of the alcoholic needs to become aware she possesses before she can effectively work to change her husband's alcohol abuse. Before she can exercise these two central freedoms, however, the wife of the alcoholic needs to learn how her husband has systematically manipulated her into a chronic state of exasperated helplessness and despair. Alcoholics Anonymous emphasizes that in order for an alcoholic to truly attain stable sobriety, he needs to resolve "the stinkin' thinkin' that triggers the drinkin'." But what is stinking thinking? Where does it come from? Why do alcoholics have stinkin' thinkin' and nonalcoholics apparently don't? Male psychological development is more complicated than most people imagine. Many men grow up secretly afraid that they will never measure up and become a "real man." Such men frequently resort to alcohol as a form of "liquid courage" and inwardly panic when their wives first ask the question "Honey, do you think you might be starting to drink too much?" Times of economic uncertainty and stress bring out the worst in some men. Male substance and alcohol abuse--as well as domestic violence--increases dramatically as men struggle with threats of layoffs and the pressures of working harder to make up for those workers already let go. Wives are often on the receiving end of husbands drinking themselves numb as a way of dealing with job and financial stressors. Hope for the Wife of an Alcoholic, while initially written for psychotherapists and substance abuse counselors, has over the years also proven useful as a selfhelp book for wives and family members of alcohol or substance abusing men.



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