

LAA *for Parents* of Adult Children

Literature



Statement of Purpose

Parents of Adult Children are always struggling to find answers to important questions. We constantly have to ask ourselves: What are healthy boundaries? Do these boundaries change as my children get older? At any given moment, am I helping them or controlling them? Where do my needs leave off and their needs begin? Am I loving them “too much” or not enough? How do I love my children without letting them abuse me? How do I avoid letting my love addiction get in the way of healthy parenting?

LAA for *Parents* of Adult Children was started to provide a safe place to explore questions like this. Together we will share our experience, strength and hope. As a group, we will support each other unconditionally. We will also read literature, share ideas, process information and work the 12-steps as adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous.

12 Steps to Setting Boundaries with Adult Children

1. Sometimes, with our children, the transition to healthy independence does not happen easily. Children growing up in a stressful environment may fear or resist independence.
2. By setting boundaries, you are helping both yourself and your grown children continue to develop into responsible individuals who honor each other.
3. Boundaries help to define who is responsible for what and to establish what resources are available (and which are not).
4. Setting boundaries with grown children can be a challenge. Adult kids may still see you as fully available to them. If you are codependent you may even want to be the same responsible, responsive parent you have always been.
5. Although they will always be your children, you cannot treat them as children when they become adults. If you do, you may inadvertently create pitfalls that ultimately interfere with their emerging independence.
6. By setting boundaries your adult children will learn essential skills. Emotionally, they will develop confidence in their abilities to take care of things for themselves and feel better about themselves.
7. When setting boundaries, you need to set clear expectations that foster respect for each other and the relationship you share.

8. In setting boundaries consider your own needs and preferences.
9. Be clear in expressing your needs and preferences.
10. Address your guilt. When you cannot meet your grown child's complete needs or requests, you may contend with guilt. As guilt shows up, remind yourself of your decision-making process and your reasons for the boundaries you are setting.
11. After you state your boundaries to your grown child, they will resist. Staying centered as you speak about the new boundary is important.
12. Explain what is possible. The good news about boundaries is that they not only set limits, they also help everyone see what is possible. Boundaries are not necessarily a total "no"; they are an essential clarification of what is and is not feasible for you to do or give.

The 12 Steps of *LAA for Parents of Adult Children*

1. We admitted we were powerless over our love for our children and our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other codependents, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Definition of Recovery

In *LAA for Parents of Adult Children* recovery is a state in which you are able to love yourself as much as you love your children. You are guided by a power greater than yourself who knows what is best for you. You are growing and changing. Parenthood enhances your life but does not determine your self-worth. Most of the time you are serene and think clearly when it comes to relationships with your children. Your behavior is sane and marked by emotional sobriety. You do not "love" too much. You do not "do" too much for your children. You do not do too little either. You have researched healthy relationships with children and know what your goals are. You stay close to people who are also in recovery in order to avoid relapse. You never take recovery for granted or become complacent.

LAA for Parents Promises

1. I have a new sense of freedom because I am letting go of the past so it will no longer affect my relationship with my children.
2. I am hopeful about my future relationship with my children.
3. I will stop giving my children money or being codependent out of guilt.
4. I will not neglect my children because of my love addiction.
5. I can tell the difference between healthy and unhealthy behavior with my children.
6. I can tell the difference between managing my children's behavior and being over controlling.
7. I do not let my children control me.
8. I know the difference between doing too much for my children and not enough.
9. I can walk away from my adult child if he or she is abusing me either verbally or physically.
10. I do not do for my children what they should be doing for themselves. However, I do not let them fend for themselves all the time.
11. I love myself as much as I love my children.
12. I look to my Higher Power for strength, guidance, and the willingness to change.

