

## Childhood Secrets that Hurt Adults

Many clients sheepishly tell me about the “stupid” things they do. One can’t ever ask his vice-president why he is late on projects. Another is very successful but feels like a fraud. One bright guy screams at his employees and is surprised to hear that they’re afraid of him. The list goes on.

These bright, competent people share a secret. Many of them aren’t even aware that this residual from their childhood is still controlling their behavior. And for some of them the secret isn’t even really a secret any longer. They’ve shared the facts with friends, family and in some cases with anyone who’ll listen. But still the onetime secret has the power to make these adults act in ways that aren’t constructive or effective.

What’s the common secret? One or both of their parents drank too much, had a drug problem, gambled, were physically abusive, or were otherwise seriously dysfunctional – the results are often the same.

Some of you may have seen me interviewed last week on Boston’s local FOX affiliate Channel 25. They were interested in a public service I sponsored during Adult Children of Alcoholics’ week. This year I offered anyone who had an interest to download a free PDF copy of my book, *Together We Heal: A Real Life Portrait of Recovery in Group Therapy*. (Anyone on my Get More Clients newsletter list that wants a copy can get one free by emailing me [Szifra@BirkeConsulting.com](mailto:Szifra@BirkeConsulting.com))

Turns out that my early work with Adult Children (ACOA’s) is a valuable asset in my current work coaching high-level executives. Many of my clients grew up in a dysfunctional family. Their upbringing has both helped motivate them to succeed and left them with some painful doubts and ineffective interpersonal habits. Many have kept their concerns and pain to themselves but have paid a price in their personal and business relationships.

The coaching that my partner (and husband) Jay Livingston and I do focuses on how to change behaviors and habits so that life is more satisfying and less stressful. Knowing that having alcoholic, drug-addicted or otherwise troubled parents can affect your adult life is also important so we can identify patterns that are not useful for you or your business. Unlike therapy, once the pattern is recognized, the focus quickly becomes, “What can I do now to make my work situation more productive and more of what I want?”

Of course, if helping your bottom line and building a better day-to-day work environment also helps build a better home life, that’s simply a bonus; a bit like a career conference in Fiji.

If you’re ready for some help improving your life and career, give us a call.