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Letting Go of Shame: A Mother's Journey Raising Addict Children

Susan Goodson

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I am not a PH.D. I do not have a Master’s degree in psychology. I am not a doctor or a therapist. What I am is a mother. I am a mother of addict alcoholic children. All of my children are addicts/alcoholics, and what I know today has come from my journey to hell and back with these incredible kids. The signs of addiction are not always apparent. Early signs may go undetected because we are not prepared to see them, or don’t understand what they are when we do. In any case, they don’t disappear when we close our eyes, and they eventually get more pronounced if ignored. This is what I have experienced and have learned along the way. Loving an addict is painful. We want to. We try. We give it everything we’ve got. Our hearts break. Our dreams die. We fall down and get up again. We cry. And cry some more. We ask questions. We seek answers. We strive to understand. And the heartache comes. We grieve for the loss of our dreams - the white picket fence, the children going off to college. We mourn the loss of what we had been raised to believe would be our life. We argue with God. We feel out of control, so we try to control the lives of everyone around us. We hold on for dear life. We agonize. We bargain. We pray. And the heartache comes. We beg. We plead. We offer advice. We suggest treatment. We give money. We bail them out of jail. We find them a job. We let them come home to live. We believe that it will be different. We give up. We give out. We sleep too much. We don’t sleep at all. And the heartache comes. My life has been surrounded by this disease. My father. My brother. My grandfather and my two ex-husbands. My friends and distant family members. And my children. All three of them. Loving alcoholics and addicts is what I have been called to do. It is my story. It is my family. It is my life.

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