

## **Characterization**

- Childhood emotional neglect
- Trauma
- Abandonment

## **Events during infancy**

1. Birth dad left when I was 1 year old
2. My brother Michael died when I was 2-3
3. Mom became unavailable, both physically and emotionally
4. I was left in the care of my siblings who were themselves traumatized children

## **Early behaviors I remember around 4 years**

- Siblings mocked my emotional distress and were only worried about being punished for causing me to cry
- I was very grateful when mom soothed me once, as though it rarely happened
- Somehow I found cognitive stimulation despite the neglect

## **Later patterns I remember after 4**

- Dad was overwhelmed and overly critical
- Mom was physically abusive to my siblings and often taunted me about my intelligence
- Violence was commonplace both parent to child and between the children
- Mom told me it was sinful to have sexual desire outside of marriage

## **Symptoms to address**

1. Major depression beginning at 13
2. Drug and alcohol use as a teenager
3. Married an abuser primarily because she was sexually repressed
4. Extremely concerned about what others think which caused alcohol binging especially after my divorce
5. I've felt unworthy all my life
6. It's as though I don't exist

## **Current problems to overcome**

- Poor dating skills due to very little practice asking women out while sober
- Seeking mom-like lovers to 'cure' myself
- Struggling to set boundaries
- Feeling I should sacrifice myself for my family

## **Key to Hope**

- My son's love was the greatest healing I've ever experienced
- There are techniques for dealing with neglect during infancy

## **Reservations about the future**

- Even as I pursue a more loving and nurturing partner I am overwhelmed by both of the possibilities, rejection and acceptance
- I am still hoping a family of my own will 'cure me'

**"IT'S NOT MY FAULT!"**