

Rebuilding Relationships in Recovery: How to Connect with Family and Close Friends After Active Alcoholism and Addiction

Janice V. Johnson Dowd

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Helpful, practical advice fills Janice V. Johnson Dowd's empathetic book *Rebuilding Relationships in Recovery*, an easy-to-read guide written to work alongside twelve-step programs like Alcoholics Anonymous.

The first three chapters establish background about addiction and treatment, though the bulk of the book focuses on practical aspects of addicts making amends with those they hurt or alienated while in active addiction. Johnson Dowd asserts that "information is power." Information about the science of addiction makes this user-friendly book well-rounded. There's advice, written activities, and tools like the HALT method, which involves stopping to assess if you are Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired.

In addition to Johnson Dowd's career in social work, she's the adult child of an alcoholic and a recovering alcoholic herself. She shares that it took time to regain relationships with her children after she got clean and spent time away in a sober house. Her now-grown children add their points-of-view, including in the brief afterword. Such anecdotes establish Johnson Dowd's experience and make the book's concepts relatable. One theme, that helping others helps one feel valuable, is illustrated by support group attendees who helped a tired new parent by holding her baby.

Useful for anyone working to understand and try to repair valued relationships that have been damaged by addiction, the supportive, wise self-help book *Rebuilding Relationships in Recovery* addresses the many different situations that recovering addicts may navigate. Its tone friendly, the book welcomes its audience to understand their own feelings, to find comfort in the universal parts of their individual challenges, and to help navigate the feelings and boundaries of their loved ones, helping amends-seekers understand that change is gradual and that estranged family members and friends have needs of their own.

MEREDITH GRAHL COUNTS (March / April 2025)

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