



Understanding the High-Functioning Alcoholic: Breaking the Cycle and Finding Hope

Sarah Allen Benton

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When people think of the 'typical' alcoholic, images of the 'fallen-down' drunk come to mind. Most do not think of professional men and women with successful careers, vibrant families, and active social lives. However, high-functioning alcoholics exist in great numbers, are unseen, and suffer no less than their struggling, failing counterparts. They include corporate presidents, politicians, teachers, tradesmen, law enforcement officials, lawyers, physicians, and even stay at home parents, who are by most accounts successful. Even as they have created lives most people would envy, the realities of alcoholism eventually strike, and recovery is just as arduous for high-functioning alcoholics as it is for lower functioning alcoholics. Benton reveals the extent of the problem, the challenges in recognizing it, the warning signs, and the methods for addressing it. Through research and interviews with both addiction experts and sober high-functioning alcoholics, she illustrates how, when, and why they become addicted, as well as the reasons their alcoholism is so hard to admit, detect, cope with, and overcome. Weaving her own story of alcoholism and recovery into the text in the form of past journal entries and reflective pieces, Benton takes us first hand into the lives of high-functioning alcoholics.

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