



Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents: How to Heal from Distant, Rejecting, or Self-Involved Parents

By Lindsay C. Gibson

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If you grew up with an emotionally immature, unavailable, or selfish parent, you may have lingering feelings of anger, loneliness, betrayal, or abandonment. You may recall your childhood as a time when your emotional needs were not met, when your feelings were dismissed, or when you took on adult levels of responsibility in an effort to compensate for your parent's behavior. These wounds *can* be healed, and you *can* move forward in your life.

In this breakthrough book, clinical psychologist Lindsay Gibson exposes the destructive nature of parents who are emotionally immature or unavailable. You will see how these parents create a sense of neglect, and discover ways to heal from the pain and confusion caused by your childhood. By freeing yourself from your parents' emotional immaturity, you can recover your true nature, control how you react to them, and avoid disappointment. Finally, you'll learn how to create positive, new relationships so you can build a better life.

Discover the four types of difficult parents:

- **The emotional parent** instills feelings of instability and anxiety
- **The driven parent** stays busy trying to perfect everything and everyone
- **The passive parent** avoids dealing with anything upsetting
- **The rejecting parent** is withdrawn, dismissive, and derogatory

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Editorial Review

Review

“Lindsay C. Gibson, PsyD, gives practical insight into a prevalent problem...The book is impeccably clear...This utter lack of confusion makes the book quite soothing, despite the heavy subject. The soothing effect is amplified by Gibson’s caring, knowledgeable voice—it’s easy to believe her when she says, ‘I wish the very best for you.’ This book can be a source of healing for adult children of these kinds of parents—particularly for young adults. But it’s also insightful for bosses, therapists, friends, and anyone else who works with, cares for, and supports the people described in this book. Gibson’s professional background allows her to anticipate people’s emotions and reticence—and urge them gently forward.”

—*Foreword Magazine*

“*Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents* is written with the wisdom and heart of a seasoned therapist and the mind of a scholar who’s spent decades poring over psychological research and theory. In this book, Lindsay C. Gibson seamlessly blends this impressive body of knowledge with the real-life experiences of her clients to create a user-friendly and highly readable book. ... This book is not about blame but rather about understanding oneself on a deep level and learning to heal.”

—**Esther Lerman Freeman, PsyD**, clinical associate professor at the Oregon Health and Science University School of Medicine

“Children cannot choose their parents. Unfortunately, many individuals grow up suffering the life-shaping adversities of having emotionally immature, neglectful parents. With wisdom and compassion, Lindsay C. Gibson enables readers to recognize and better understand these toxic relationships and to create novel, healthy paths of healing. This book provides a powerful opportunity for self-help and is a wonderful resource for therapists to recommend to clients in need.”

—**Thomas F. Cash, PhD**, Professor Emeritus of psychology at Old Dominion University, and author of *The Body Image Workbook*

“Lindsay C. Gibson’s insightful book offers the ‘emotionally lonely’ a step-by-step journey toward self-awareness and healing. Gibson’s revealing anecdotes, enlightening exercises, and honest insight lead the reader to a better understanding of how to connect more fully with oneself and others. This is an excellent book for anyone who feels isolated from family members and seeks to enjoy a more emotionally connected life.”

—**Peggy Sijswerda**, editor and publisher of *Tidewater Women* (tidewaterwomen.com) and *Tidewater Family* (tidewaterfamily.com), and author of *Still Life with Sierra*

“Lindsay C. Gibson’s *Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents* is an insightful and compassionate guide for anyone seeking to understand and overcome the long-term impact of growing up in an emotionally barren family. Here you will find sage advice and simple practices that will help you break free from old patterns, connect more deeply with yourself and others, and, ultimately, be the person you were always meant to be.”

—**Ronald J. Frederick, PhD**, psychologist and author of *Living Like You Mean It*

“Lindsay C. Gibson, a very experienced psychotherapist, wrote *Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents* to provide guidance to adults for self-help in resolving anxiety, depression, and relationship difficulties that result from having emotionally immature parents. It is a thorough and detailed description of immature parents, children’s experience of their parenting, and methods to resolve the resulting problems. There are many useful examples from Gibson’s psychotherapy clients. The book includes helpful exercises for self-understanding. A person can use the book to develop emotional maturity and deeper relationships.”

—**Neill Watson, PhD**, research professor and Professor Emeritus of psychology at the College of William and Mary, and clinical psychologist who does research on anxiety, depression, and psychotherapy

“Based on years of reading, research, and working with patients, psychologist Lindsay C. Gibson has written an outstanding book about the multiple ways that emotionally immature parents impact the lives of their adult children. I highly recommend *Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents* for all readers who want to understand the parent/child dynamic. This is an uplifting book that provides hope and superb coping strategies for those who find it difficult or impossible to bond with parents who lack empathy and sensitivity. ... *Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents* is full of wisdom that will enable you to relate to your family members and friends in the healthiest way possible—no matter what age you are—and possibly even to recognize what’s behind some of the dysfunctional exchanges depicted in the news and in popular culture.”

—**Robin Cutler, PhD**, historian and author of *A Soul on Trial*

“Lindsay C. Gibson’s book, *Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents*, is filled with clinical vignettes that will resonate with adult children of emotionally immature parents. The book also offers practical advice and exercises for identifying one’s true self and avoiding the pitfalls of self-images, relationships, and fantasies that undermine one’s psychological well-being. Finally, the book provides solid guidelines for interacting with one’s emotionally immature parents in a manner that avoids painful and damaging recreations of the past. Readers will find relief from recognizing that they are not alone and that they are understood by this remarkable clinician.”

—**B. A. Winstead, PhD**, professor of psychology at Old Dominion University and the Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology, and coeditor of *Psychopathology: Foundations for a Contemporary Understanding, Third Edition*

About the Author

Lindsay C. Gibson, PsyD, is a clinical psychologist in private practice who specializes in individual psychotherapy with adult children of emotionally immature parents. She is author of *Who You Were Meant to Be* and writes a monthly column on well-being for *Tidewater Women* magazine. In the past she has served as an adjunct assistant professor of graduate psychology for the College of William and Mary, as well as for Old Dominion University. Gibson lives and practices in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

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