

Reaction to When a Man Loves a Woman

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SA 201 Addiction In The Family

## Reaction to When a Man Loves a Woman

I think that this movie is a very enlightening look into a lot of alcoholic homes in America. It has some very real truths about what it looks like to be part of a family affected by and living with addiction. It shows that alcoholism is a family disease, and affects more than just the alcoholic. I had watched this movie once or twice before, but watching it this time with a newer perspective on addiction, and how it truly affects the entire family was very interesting.

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The movie *When a Man Loves a Woman* is a movie that depicts a family living with an alcoholic mother/wife named Alice. You can see early in the movie how Michael the husband of Alice and the father of the children is enabling Alice's bad behavior. There is sort of a fine line between a healthy support, and enabling. Enabling is support, but it allows addictive, and self-destruction behavior to take place. Enabling ignores the behavior, and allows it to continue without serious mention or consequences. I could see that Michael recognized Alice's drinking becoming problematic when she failed to call and went out drinking with friends and came home late. It starts affecting his career, and he is showing up late for work. This is a trend in the movie. He starts to become seriously distracted at work and when she goes to rehab later in the film, he gets very agitated when talking on the phone with his boss.

### Recommendations:

From what I could tell in the movie this family does not struggle with money so that didn't hold them back from getting treatment for Alice. I do think that during the assessment process Michael's enabling behavior should be addressed. We could discuss certain goals personally, as well as family goals. This family has been through some trauma due to the addiction so discussing healthy ways to communicate and give healthy support would be a topic I would want to explore and implement. For the healthy communication process I would ask Alice what she would like to see from her family so they have a better

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understanding of needs she would like to have met, as well as what needs the family would like to have met from Alice. It would be important to have the entire family working together for the benefit of the family. I would ask Alice to continue to utilize the Alcoholics Anonymous program for her success. If possible I would ask Michael to also continue to attend these meetings as well, as it seems to bring him better understanding and awareness.

I also think Alice's recognition of her own family pattern of alcoholism starting with her father is worth exploring and using as a great teaching opportunity. It probably goes further than with her father so we should discuss family patterns and how those affect her own children, and what she can do to prevent the continuance of that cycle. I felt that Alice and her husband had a pretty strong bond and should continue to use couples counseling.

Finally, if I had to say there was anything missing in this movie it would be counseling for the children. Studies definitely show that children are deeply affected by addiction in the family and I would absolutely recommend Alice's children attend some sort of family counseling to help them work through and learn how to cope with an addicted parent.

This family seems to have unconditional love for one and other so if love is a motivating factor in recovery, they will succeed.