

Drug Addiction Recovery: The 12 Step Way

I often find myself baffled by the alternatives to 12 step Recovery. It's kind of right out of the AA Big Book; "looking for an easier, softer way!"

If you really look at what happens to the person that is afflicted with the disease of Addiction, it's a tale of immorality, unscrupulous ways, and anti-social thinking being adapted to. With the focus of a life becoming narrowed down to obtaining and using a drug, not much is left that would indicate ever needing to be concerned about other people or things, unless they're needed for that "Quest"! A true Addict, at the height of an Addiction does not care about anyone else, when all is said and done!

The goal of Recovery, in our Society, is once again, or for the first time, to become a productive member of said Society. An Addict most in generally becomes such an anti-social being in many or even just one way that he can no longer blend in with, or hide from the rest of the world. Quite to the contrary, at some point the Addict begins to "stick out like a sore thumb." Thus they are apprehended by the law for one or more of their anti-social behaviors, if they don't die first. When Bill and Bob, the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous and the 12 step concept, were in the conception and philosophical stages of their journey to Sobriety, they found that they had to very nearly do a 180 degree turnabout. This is the point I've been trying to get to in that it is what the 12 step concept guides one into being able to accomplish. This kind of turn-around produces something that I don't think Bill and Bob would ever have been so presumptuous as to claim but I will. This "way-of-life" produces "Good" people.

True enough, the AA Twelve Step Program provides for the agnostic and only asks that one acknowledge a higher power of some sort. But God had a hand in the whole AA thing. Even though they carefully sculpted the program to leave no one out, they acknowledge God by name, over and over throughout the Big Book. The actual goal that the Big Book accomplishes directly parallels the teachings of Jesus and His Disciples in the New Testament of the Holy Bible, and their goal! The outcome of a good personal 12 step program is what every Preacher, Priest, Minister, Rabbi, or any other Religious leader, is trying to produce with his congregation. I must say though, that the 12 Step Program does propose more of a loving, caring God. A God that only needs to be asked for help and in no way professes Hell or Damnation. This is one of it's strongest points. My faith was restored by the 12 Step Program because it made it easier for me to believe that I could be forgiven and given Holy Graciousness. Every time that you walk into a meeting room, you see miracles. There, you learn to recognize a miracle when you see one!

Before AA I had given up believing, and thought that what I had done left no room for redemption. I could not even try, because every religion that I had experienced had led me to believe that I was a "hopeless sinner." I felt that no matter what I did, what I had done, left me destined to "burn in Hell." Then in meetings I met these people who were so able to care about others. They were people who had changed from one thing into something new. The more of this I saw the easier it became for me to think, "Maybe I could do that too!" Maybe there was hope for someone like me! Maybe God could forgive me! Maybe I could actually become a good person!

I'm a Drug Counselor now. But even with my education that led to certification, I see nothing more powerful, with any better results than 12 Step Recovery. I see where counseling added to 12 Step Recovery, increases success. I will state though that if one or the other had to be taken out of the equation, I believe that the 12 Stepper would do better than someone who only had Counseling. The 12 step concept is sort of a guide to living life, that doesn't leave out

much of anything. In one way or another the answers to the dilemmas of life are covered by the 12 Steps. A lot of information is inside of the 12 Step Group, as members learn and are given interpretations from others, they then pass that info on to others. In this way AA and NA, in particular, carry on the traditions and wisdom of the founders, and even improve on and relate it to new members and it evolves along with Society itself. I'm sure that other 12 Step groups that I have not experienced must do the same. Where I live there are several AA groups that have been around since 1949, only 10 years after the Big Book was published! There's almost always an "Old Timer" around to bounce things off of. Yet, there are also, often, teenagers mingled in with the group.

Most people involved with a 12 Step group will tell you that it's the people, sharing a common problem that gives them the most strength in their battle against alcoholism and addiction. 12 Step recovery is FREE and provides a built in support system that you can count on the first time you show up. New people or "Newcomers" are considered the most important one in the room. This is a fact of the 12 Step concept. The first day you walk in the door you can become a permanent part of the group with no other qualification other than a "desire to stop drinking or using"! The fact is that looking for an easier, softer way can, in the world of drug addiction be a "fatal" mistake... because active addiction leads only to agony, jails, institutions and death!