ForeWord Reviews

SELF-HELP

Alive Again: Recovering from Alcoholism and Drug Addiction
Howard C. Samuels
John Wiley & Sons
978-1-118-36441-3
(Mar 27, 2013)

Therapist, recovering addict, shows you don't have to be boring to be sober; offers excellent advice on what to expect when you decide to seek help.

"As a therapist, I don't actually save patients," states clinical psychologist Howard C. Samuels in his new book, *Alive Again: Recovering from Alcoholism and Drug Addiction*. A leading specialist in the treatment of alcohol and drug addiction, the doctor—himself a recovering addict—may find that his patients and their families and friends do not agree.

Samuels may not be performing life-saving surgery, but his work in creating and operating effective recovery programs for addicts has changed the lives of thousands, helping them to save themselves. His book is certain to touch and change the lives of thousands more.

Alive Again is a must-read for anyone dealing with alcoholism or drug addiction. It is a straightforward book that explains a great deal about addiction, its causes, and its treatment. Samuels advocates ongoing therapy and a 12-step program, with a goal of healing through increased self-respect and deeper, more engaging human relationships.

As a recovering alcoholic and addict himself, sober now for twenty-eight years, Samuels knows firsthand about the excuses, manipulation, and denial inherent with addiction. His own experiences add immensely to his credibility as an effective addiction therapist and writer, and he sugarcoats nothing. Rationalizations like, "I can't do cocaine anymore, but I can handle a little glass of Scotch," "it's only one drink," and "it's just a little weed" are as common as they are dangerous. Samuels once swore to his family that he would never touch cocaine again; instead, he went back to heroin. As he wryly promises, in dealing with addiction, "one thing always leads to another."

He knows there are no shortcuts in addressing recovery, and between his own background and his work as a therapist, he can—and does–explain exactly why. His writing is personal, focused, and convincing. A bit coarse at times, his language is necessarily direct and clear: dealing with alcoholism and addiction is not pretty.

"You don't have to be perfect, boring, and holy in order to be happy and sober," Samuels declares. "You can still be crazy, irreverent, artsy, funny, and offbeat. That's good crazy." Self-described as "good crazy" himself, Samuels displays an engaging personality that allows for laughter even in the face of such a serious subject. Some stories about his own tragic past exploits are downright funny, from rifling through coat pockets at high-end parties to finding his arrest photo on the front page of the newspaper. He makes it easy for readers to relate, which not only inspires, but projects hope—something alcoholics, addicts, and their friends and families often find sorely lacking.

Seeking help for addiction can be an overwhelming process, and *Alive Again* offers excellent advice on where to begin, and what to expect. Samuels knows his subject matter thoroughly and presents it so well that his book should be required reading, not only for alcoholics, addicts, and their loved ones, but for every high school student in America.

Cheryl Hibbard