

Excuse Me, Your Life is Waiting! A Bridge from Addiction to Early Recovery

Robert Boich

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"I've got a chance now," said author Robert Boich in the early stages of his recovery from drug and alcohol abuse. "I'm learning how to cope with all that life has to throw at me. In the past, I only had one way to deal with life, one tool, and that was alcohol and drugs. They worked for a while...Unfortunately, there were also a lot of side effects associated with this course of action."

Boich recalls, with startling honesty, the people, places, and events that helped him to transition from an active state of addiction to the early stages of recovery; in doing so he clarifies the difference between abstinence and recovery or sobriety. In abstinence one may refrain from substance abuse yet retain all the problems and traits of an addict; recovery, however, is achieved when one has, as one counselor suggested, "changed everything," from one's beliefs and attitudes about the nature of the world, to one's responses to the events of everyday life.

Boich elucidates how the thought processes of an addict differ from those of the rest of the world, and warns that someone in the grip of addiction will do "stupid things" that, to him or her, will seem perfectly normal. Non-addicts may find it difficult to understand how one could trade precious time with one's child for a chance to get high, or rate the need to obtain drugs higher than the welfare of one's family, or even one's own life. The addict may feel misunderstood, and attribute his or her problems to others; rarely will an addict take responsibility for the hurt and damage that have resulted from his or her actions, and this can wreak havoc in relationships and destroy families, businesses, and neighborhoods. Recognizing the error in the belief that if one could "fix" one's substance abuse, one's life would "fix itself," the author found that if he did not fix his life, true recovery would be impossible. Denial plays such a strong role in an addict's evaluation of his or her situation that a strong support group and qualified help is essential, and the author strongly advises against trying to go it alone.

Boich came to recognize that the simple formula that governs an addict's life, "get drugs—get high—repeat," was a recipe for failure and early death. He decided to change his life when he realized that it was only a matter of time before his substance abuse would land him in prison, or cause him to lose everything he had and everyone he loved.

The author takes readers into the convoluted mind of an addict struggling to eliminate drugs and alcohol from his life. Sober for over six months, he now helps others through the stages of their recovery. "Alcoholics and addicts have a unique gift," according to Boich. "It's an endowment that usually can't be realized or tapped into until an individual embarks on some type of program of recovery. Our curse can become a blessing. We have the ability to help other addicts and alcoholics where all others have failed." In writing the story of his journey from addiction to recovery, the author has done just that.

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