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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ SELF-HELP

I Cut It Out: an (ex) Drunk's Guide To Sobriety

Jeffrey Somach
I Cut It Out (December 2007)
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How can you convince a drunk of anything? “I’m sober and you’re not” Jeffrey Somach writes “so I know what I’m talking about and you don’t. Offended? Too bad. Not offended? Good. I’m a New Yorker and this is the way I talk.” That’s the kind of straight talk the author uses in *I Cut It Out* to get the attention of drunks who may not care about much of anything anymore. With his wife Linda Busch a licensed clinical psychologist he challenges reasons with cajoles and exhorts alcoholics and those who don’t yet know they are to do something about it. Somach who does most of the talking was a drunk until the age of thirty. “Wine and Tylenol were my only friends. Depression low self-esteem self-loathing and disgust all tied for second pace.” He has been sober now for fifteen years and abounds with wit and good advice. He answers all of the alcoholic’s questions and objections while he educates readers on how to get sober and stay that way. “The drinking was just a symptom…So what is causing the drink? That my friend is where you get into the emotional sobriety business” he writes. And why isn’t there some quick fix? Why doesn’t will power work in this situation? Because “Booze does something for you…lets you escape your feelings. Once you’ve put it down and done nothing else you are worse off because you’ve taken away the only thing that sort of ‘worked’ so far.” Somach covers everything from “How do I know I really have a problem?” to Alcoholics Anonymous medications therapy and occasions when “a drink is almost literally shoved into your hand.”

Linda Busch speaks up in an important chapter addressed to the alcoholic’s spouse. She points out ways to help a drunk deal with the problem and not be part of it. By your dysfunctional behavior “You probably enable your…spouse almost every day. Do you buy booze for your spouse?…pay the bills because he can’t hold a job?” she asks. “It is time for you to stop trying to sober up your spouse and clean up your act.”

Throughout the book Somach speaks forcefully and with clarity. His understanding of the drunk’s mind and motivations is deep and compassionate and he makes a strong appeal to not only read a book but to take action. He walks the reader through recognizing the problem dealing with it and once again finding joy in life: “I am ordering you to go have some fun without drinking. To live is to have fun.” “You will enjoy rediscovering yourself” he writes. “You will enjoy meeting your old friend YOU!”

If a book can convince someone with an alcohol problem to seek change this is it. The drunk will recognize himself in these pages and learn how to do something different. If you’re a friend of an alcoholic give this book away (It’s inexpensive enough to do when needed). There should be a copy of this book on the coffee table of every alcoholic household so that those who drink too much will be encouraged to cut it out.
DAVID GEORGE (February 28, 2008)

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