

Review of: "Philosophy as a Way of Life as a Pathway to Recovery for Addicted Individuals"

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The idea of Philosophy as a Way of Life promoting recovery among those addicted to alcohol and drugs is quite intriguing. The author mentions Stoicism as a philosophy, but did not mention that Rational Emotive Therapy could be seen as fairly stoic. Rather than getting so upset by different life events that do not meet expectations, alcoholics or addicts would be taught to think very rationally, patiently, and calmly about their lives. They would be taught not to “should” all over themselves or catastrophize, but speak to themselves in a way that helps them to methodically approach life.

I really enjoyed Du Plessis' emphasis on finding a virtuous principle (e.g., unconditional life acceptance) to replace self-defeating orientations such as perfectionism or “everything must go my way, or I am miserable”. However, virtuous principles such as this have been successfully applied to addictions and alcoholism for many decades via Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Heroin Anonymous, and faith. For instance, the Bible teaches that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). This helps the recovering person to believe that even their worst moments can end up leading to a cascade of good things happening later. For instance, Joseph was sold into slavery and thrown into an Egyptian prison for two years. Rather than sulk and give up on his dreams, he sought to help a depressed Baker in the cell beside him. Interpreting the Baker's dream led to Joseph having the opportunity later interpret the Pharaoh's dream and save Egypt and surrounding countries from famine (Genesis 41). Many alcoholics and addicts in AA/NA/HA gain a great deal of hope when they see how sponsors and wise members with months of sobriety now help others stay sober.

Rather than take time to talk about political ideologies, I would like to see this article go more into depth in applying Philosophy to sobriety and recovery. The article mentioned metaphysical security and that is the realm of not only Philosophy, but Spirituality. Thus, I think it may also be wise to embrace that fact that spiritual principles, such as faith and hope could go well with Philosophical thinking in helping to promote recovery. It should also be noted that Cohen's Mental Health Consultation model also works on repairing syllogisms, albeit indirectly in the mind's of consultees, rather than directly in clients.

Perhaps my favorite part of this intriguing article is the discussion of refusing to regret the past. AA/NA/HA teach addicts to not regret the past because the past can be used to encourage and teach others. Furthermore, there is recent evidence that positive time attitudes toward the past, present, and future reduces risk of alcohol use, binge drinking, and marijuana use among teens (Froiland, Worrell, Olenchak, & Kowalski, 2021). This idea of wanting nothing to be different in the past,

not concealing the past, and going so far as to love it is quite amazing and could be potentially liberating to an addict. It would also help them to have a positive time attitude toward the past, which predicts a greater love for learning, engagement with life, and sobriety (Froiland et al., 2021).

References

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