

Episode 5 — The Doctor's Opinion, Part 2

Okay. Welcome back to agnostic AA. This is part two of the doctor's opinion. It's a little long, so hang out. Be sure to read along if you can make sure to leave comments, etc.. Let's get into it.

The subject presented in this book seems to me to be of paramount importance to those afflicted with alcohol addiction. There's that alcoholic addiction. I love quoting that, when people get all pissy about it. Well, alcohol. We only deal with alcohol. We don't deal with, addiction and how to exact.

Go fuck yourself. It's right here in the book, you know, just typical alcoholic grandiosity, self-importance, moral superiority. I only drank my liver away. I'm better than a heroin addict who prostitutes themselves. I had a guy say that the other day. It was just like, wow, dude, you're missing the point, you know? Oh, and that and that bonehead was in, agnostic AA, as well.

So that arrogance is stunning. And, God, no. God. Arrogance. Arrogance is definitely, a trait of alcoholics. Anyway,

just as another FYI,

silk worth, was the head of town's hospital in Uptown, Park Avenue in New York City, which is still a fancy schmancy area. So, again, it's kind of a big deal, that the doctor, as I've heard said, you know, basically silk worth was the fallacy of, alcoholism back in his day.

So Fauci saying, yeah, you gotta trust these guys. They seem to have something that's really working. That's a kind of a big deal.

you know, today we have better language for it, you know, peer to peer recovery support, etc., etc.. Does it have to be wrapped up in, bow of religiosity? No, it doesn't, and that's why I'm here.

Right? Anyway, moving on. I say this after many years experience as medical director of one of the oldest hospitals in the country treating alcoholic and drug addiction, there was therefore a sense of real satisfaction when I was asked to contribute a few words on a subject which is covered in such masterly detail in these pages. We doctors have realized for a long time that some form of moral psychology was of urgent importance to alcoholics, but its application presented difficulties beyond our conceptions, what with our ultra modern standards or scientific approach to everything.

We are perhaps not well equipped to apply the powers of good that lay outside our synthetic knowledge.

That's a pretty big statement, that alcoholics doctors recognized. These guys are, you know, they're so delusional. There's, you know, they need some kind of moral psychology was of urgent importance to alcoholics, you know, moral again, we can call that just truth. You know, some truthful fucking admissions like, bro, look at yourself. You're you're you're choking back.

Vomit blood in the morning from your first sip because you got a drink. That's that's insane. You've lost it. You need some help?

Or myself, you know, total ugliness, right? You know, my last drunk, you know. In my last drunk, berated my then wife for, I don't know, 3 or 4 hours, gleefully, joyfully, happily blaming her for all my problems.

Blew up that marriage, destroyed it thoroughly in a drunken rage of unresolved trauma issues and personal failings. And I blamed it all on her. And I was having fun, and I was drunk. I was a goddamn, you know, King Kong wannabe monkey pounding his fucking chest and fist in the streets of fucking me. And I was a maniac, you know?

I needed some help, but I needed some honest honesty. And I needed a time and place where people could help me see my own craziness. I couldn't see it. Hey, you know, help me to do that. Not everyone. Plenty of people have wanted me to leave the rooms. And, you know, I have been thrown out of rooms. But there was enough.

You know, I found my people who could hear me, could let me speak, could identify with me, didn't hold me in moral contempt because you know what? They'd been there to. So I get it. And I did need this moral psychology.

and,

And I do it without, God. So. There's something here that works.

And I didn't know until I truly did it.

Moving on. Many years ago, one of the leading contributors to this book came under our care in this hospital. And while here, he acquired some ideas which he put into practical application at once. There's that. It's really important, right? Practical application. Do the work. I had to do the work. If I didn't do the work, I'd probably still be drinking.

Anyway, Muna later, who requested the privilege of being allowed to tell his story to other patients here and with some misgiving, we consented. The cases we have followed through have been most interesting. In fact, many of them are amazing. The unselfishness of these men as we have come to know them, the entire absence of profit motive and their community spirit is indeed inspiring to one who has labored as long and wearily in this alcoholic field.

They believe in themselves, and still more in the power which pulls some chronic alcoholics back from the gates of death.

Of course, an alcoholic ought to be freed from his physical craving for liquor, and this often requires a definite hospital procedure before psychological measures can be of maximum benefit.

All right, back on that page.

the entire absence of profit motive. Yep. That's true. And that, as I said earlier, I really appreciate, you know, I once I had, one sponsor in early sobriety who, you know, kind of baffled him with some of my questions and my angst.

And he didn't have answers for me. And he's like, you know, maybe, maybe you want to go see a psychologist. And, that disturbed me. And I stood up and I walked over to the the wall or whatever, smoked cigaret halfway out the door. And, you know, and he just sat and held space for me and, you know, I told him I didn't want to go to a psychologist because that required money, which I had, and I could have, but I, I wanted something in this world to not have money tied to it.

And that guy gave that to me. So he didn't wind up being my sponsor forever and ever and ever. But. And we're not even really friends anymore. I don't really know where he is in the world and he doesn't know where I am. But that moment where and for that time frame, he did give me of his time freely and that gave me hope in what I consider to be a transactional world, dog eat, dog world.

And that reality frightens and disturbs me, multiple levels because one, I'm not particularly good at it. Two, I'm jealous that I'm not good at it. And just wanted something different, something more. Something besides the day to day grind of existence and mortgages and bills and transaction. Is there anything decent and noble in this existence? Well, that guy's act did do that for me, and I appreciate that.

And so that's what I, you know, trying to do here. And I try to do when I'm working with a real person needing to write, talk and read the book. So

anyway, the entire absence of profit motive,

Then the power which pulls chronic alcoholics back in the gates of death, you know, obviously they're speaking. And he was speaking and, you know, kind of divinity terms, etc., etc..

I don't know, could be I just, you know, still haven't experienced that. But what I have experienced is people, right? People helping each other genuinely, honestly, with no profit motive. No, emotional dynamic power trip motive, no sexual motive. Just hey, man, I know the pain you're in and the difficulty of, not having a goddamn drink today.

And this is what I do to get through it. Maybe it can help you, you know? And look, there is no true selflessness. I get benefit out of carrying the message. I get the self esteem. I get the personal integrity. I get, the feeling of commitment and connection and purpose, because I'm carrying the message. I'm doing the right thing for myself.

So there is that quality to it. But that selfishness of it is, is, frankly, I think, a good thing. Right? So long as I remember I'm just a bozo on the bus, too, and that everything I have to say is just my opinion. I have no authority over you. I don't have any authority over anybody, especially not a newcomer who is coming to me for help.

All I can do is offer the help that I have to give, and if they don't want it, okay, don't take it. You know, I think sponsoring needs to be approached like, you know, feeding a, a desperate, hurt, angry lion. All right, well, here you go. A little lion here's here's a piece of meat. You can eat that if you want, but, you know, I'm ready to bolt if I have to.

You know, I'm sure not going to hold your mouth open and shove it down your throat. It's not my job anyway. I like this part of a. And also that kindness and care and compassion isn't unique to AA. It may be the only place some of us have experienced it genuinely and honestly in our lives. But it's not the only place that it exists.

So just saying, careful not to get to, you know, ra ra age. The only way. Okay. It's not, but it is been very beneficial to me and I'm happy to share that.

moving on. We believe in so suggested a few years ago that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy, that the phenomena of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all. And once, having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost self-confidence and their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and they become astonishingly difficult to solve.

I had, in that bit, you know, that basically that whole paragraph underline, you know, chronic alcoholic is a manifestation of an allergy phenomena of craving. If you're an alcoholic, you know what that craving is. And that that never occurs in the average person again. So does the first sip taste like more? If yes, then you're probably an alcoholic because normal people don't have that.

And from a doctor's point of view, they verify that, you know, the non alcoholics don't get that allergic level craving that we get. So I have that signed, my initials next to that. And you know, from the doctor's point of view who saw this over and over and over again as many doctors today see over and over and over again.

Right. The allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all.

And again, you know, you don't think so. Okay. Go have a drink.

Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices. The message, which can interest and whole. These alcoholic people must have depth and weight. In nearly all cases, their ideals must be grounded in a power greater to themselves if they are to recreate their lives. So this is the doctor talking specifically about the, alcoholic types such as Bill, and those AA has helped in the past, including myself.

Right. That their ideals, these guiding principles have to be grounded in a power greater than themselves.

I can sit here and say no, my ideals aren't grounded in some mythical divinity thing. They are grounded in, Ideals. They are grounded in the experience of one alcoholic talking to another. They are grounded in, my, alcohol recovery community.

Those people that I can talk to and turn to for, emotional support. Mental support. Getting some ideas from, and how to live sober in this drunk world. So that's a power greater than me, right? And I can I can proceed, with the steps in this approach to life based in that idea.

And I have. Maybe you can do

I also had underlined recreate their lives. Right. Because it really for me is I'm. And I'm still in the process. You know, we'll see where it goes. But, you know, the life I lived today and what I tried to do today and approach things today. Is very different. I mean, you know, talk about my problems.

Meditate daily. I used to meditate way back when, but do it. Really? Meditate daily. Set a daily intention or two. When disturbed. Shut up and start looking at myself. Start looking at my disturbance versus whatever caused it. Try to find understanding within myself so that I can find my own calm, regardless of what what's going on out there?

That's that's new.

If any feel that is psychiatrist directing a hospital for alcoholics, we appear somewhat sentimental. Let them stand with us. Or while on the firing line. See the tragedies, the despairing wives, the little children. Let the solving of these problems become part of their daily work, and even in their sleeping moments. And the most cynical will not wonder that we have accepted and encouraged this movement.

we feel that after many years of experience, that we have found nothing which has contributed more to the rehabilitation of these men than the altruistic movement now growing up among them. Well, that is pretty bold. And that's a big statement. Again, this is Fousey level saying, yep. Everything modern science has is of no value other than, yeah, we can get them sober.

We can give him an IV, but to clean them up and send them back into the world, and watch them walk out of here and into a bar. Is maddening and frustrating. And then here we have a AA is a stopgap. AA is is worked for so many of these people that.

Can't hurt. Now that was early AA. It's now almost 100 years later. There's now, you know, 2 million members. There's, you know, the over 100,000 groups. And that's just what they, you know, as to me, it's more than that. People get caught cards and are forced into AA, which, you know, that kind of

violates the traditions,

don't you think?

Right. That's total bullshit. Because then, you know, some of you get a court card and you get forced to go in. And here you have these people talking about God and how it's all voluntary, etc., etc. but then you get these little mini egomaniacs, we're like, yeah, we'll sign your core card, but you got to sit down and listen to us, which is the same shit that most alcoholics have been rebelling against their entire lives and drink over.

And here it is happening again in this place that proclaims that they are here to only help. So, myself, if I'm chairing a meeting and somebody comes in with a cork card, I'll sign it right then and there and say, this is bullshit, I'll sign it for you, because I'm doing you a favor, but you don't have to stay.

Get out of here if you don't want to be here, go. And by the way, you never have to come back. Just get some friend of yours to sign it. Or use different hands and sign it. Because forcing you to be here is a complete violation of what this program pretends to be. So why am I going to stand here and think I have some type of authority or right to tell you that you must listen to what I have to say?

That's total bullshit. In my not humble opinion.

Maybe the original 100 were like that and truly altruistic. I'm not sure. That established a really holds for those ideals, at least not as strongly as I think they should. But you know who gives a shit, right? I got my opinion. You got yours. And again.

I haven't had a drink in four plus years, and I attribute most of it to this book.

Trying to live the AA way, trying to live by some principles, and trying not to be, a self-centered, selfish prick all the time.

Moving on to the next.

Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive. The tastes like more is so elusive that while they admit that it is injurious, they cannot, after time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one.

They are restless, irritable, and discontented unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks which they see others taking with impunity after they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomena of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful with a firm resolution not to drink again.

This is repeated over and over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change, there is very little hope of recovery. Okay, that's big stuff. Let's talk about that.

I got I basically have that, you know, signature. Signature, my initials next to it. You'll hear this a lot in the rooms. They are restless, irritable, and discontent.

That is totally a truth, right? That goes to the unmanaged ability of step one, right where they say, we are powerless over alcohol and our lives have become unmanageable. That's what for me is the UN manageability. I had a job when I came in. I had a car when I came back, I didn't have any friends left and I didn't have any family left.

But I did have a job and a car and a place to live and some money. Right? So, the material side. No, I did not qualify. Being an alcoholic on the emotional side. Absolutely. Restless, irritable and discontent. If I don't have a drink. Right. And I get that that gnawing, that, that I gotta have a drink.

I gotta have a drink. I gotta have a drink. Right? You know, and I could manage it, you know, I could maintain until after work, and then I'd start drinking. Right? Sometimes, well, for me, honestly, I didn't really drink at work. I just didn't get there because I had it managed. I had it organized. I was a functioning alcoholic right?

Until the big blow up, until I destroyed my 22 year marriage. Right till I went to bed drunk, wanting to die and not wake up in the morning. So, so much so that that has even lasted into sobriety. Yeah. And then talk about un manageability. That's what it is, right?

In one of the stories in the book it says I didn't have a problem putting down the drink.

I had a problem with not drinking. I had a problem with reality. I had a problem with staying, not drinking. It's true, I absolutely did. I always had some reason to go back, oh, I got this or fuck it or whatever, but I would go back to it right?

But I haven't now in four plus years. So something right that was working.

Even without a god, something is working.

Then again, it's just a reiteration in the phenomenon of craving.

That comes from, you know, having a few drinks, right? There's that taste, like, more. Right? And then it turns into fear. It goes from taste like more to I must have more. Right. And we've all done this, you know, I'm never going to drink again. Yeah, well, wait until five. All right, I got those those on, and I'm sure you can think about it and, you know, identify if you're like me, you you think about it, you'll be able to identify with that as well.

Or maybe you can't. I don't know if you can I don't I don't I don't know what else to tell you. You know. Go have a drink. I really don't know. Sorry. Well, this is important. The doctor's saying that they must experience an entire psychic change. Otherwise, there's very little hope of his recovery.

I have had, you know, some psychic change, some mental change, some disposition.

But I still hold to, you know, some of the beliefs I used to have and still do. And they've been affirmed. You know, I came into a agnostic. I tried to set it aside. I tried to,

Believe in some higher power and divinity. And frankly, it drives me crazy because, you know, turn our life and wheel over to the care of God as we understood him. Right. That's such an implication that just says that there's this loving higher power that's going to care for me. Yet, yet, yet I haven't had a drink and I can be still a maniac.

I haven't had a drink, and I have still lost a job. I haven't had a drink and I still haven't, regained my marriage. I never will, in fact, have moved on to full on divorce. And now we barely talk. It's civil, but we barely talk. I've had old friends come back and are now gone. I've had new friends come and they're now gone.

And I haven't had a drink.

So.

What is this?

Psychic change. That must happen for me to not have a drink. It's just not true. But

I haven't had a drink. There is some change.

Some mental and emotional changes, where I am able to kind of let go of things and I don't have to go toe to toe all the time about everything, and I haven't had to have a drink.

So.

some change was in order for me. And I have achieved some of it. And I keep walking the path and I as I go along, I see other things that I would like to change myself and can.

So.

On the other hand, and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand, once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems you despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules.

And I had this written in because it's where the sponsor told me trust God, clean house, help others. Right? Well, we can scratch the God bit, but clean house? Yeah. Moral inventory. Looking at myself, a life unexamined isn't worth living. Socrates. Right? You know, I do look at myself today and where I can see that I'm wrong. I try to make change.

I try to make amends. Whether that's, actually saying sorry or just recognizing that. Yeah, I don't I don't want to be that way anymore. I want to try to act differently. Something that act more towards my value of of that I borrowed from a, you know, love and tolerance for others. I want to be more kind.

I want to be more patient. I want to be more detached where I don't really care what your opinions are or are not of me. Right? I want to live to my own values and my own purpose. And if they align with yours, fantastic. And if they don't align with yours, fantastic. I will show you the human courtesy in respect of, you know, not belittling you for your beliefs and values.

And hopefully you do the same for me. And if I have to physically fight for it, I will. But that rarely occurs, right? The last time you had to have a fist fight? It's been a long time for me, right? And even the last one I didn't have to have. In retrospect, I was like 30 years ago.

Next,

men have cried out to me in sincere and despairing appeal. Doctor, I cannot go on like this. I have everything to live for. I must stop, but I cannot. You must help me. Faced with this problem, if a doctor is honest with himself, he must sometimes feel his own inadequacy. Although he gives all that is in him, it is often not enough.

One feels that something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change. Okay, that's the doctor's opinion. I don't know. You know, and I get it. I get, I get the, the hope that there's something right, something more. It's such a comforting idea to believe that there's some divinity at play and that it can be appealed to and received from,

It's just now my experience.

You know, I think if I'm going to wait around for God to, you know, stick his finger in my brain and scramble it up and make me different, I'll go get a fucking lobotomy.

Until then, I gotta take my own action. Right. And, oh, by the way, a lobotomy also wouldn't be God, that'd be some doctor poking my brain and scrambling it. Which, you know, that used to be a solution that you used to do that to people. I don't know if you can get a lobotomy anymore. At least not, you know, an official one.

I'm sure you can, you know, go drink and do enough drugs until your brain is completely scrambled. Which, by the way, can happen, right? And with alcohol, it's called wet brain. Your wet brain. You are truly fucked.

All right. That's the end of part two of the doctor's opinion. In the next segment, we will finish out the doctor's opinion and move on to Bill's story.

Anyway, that's the end of part two. Sure to like and subscribe, leave your comments and all that. So on.