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DISCOVERY TO RECOVERY: SCIENCE, SPIRITUALITY & 12-STEP FACILITATED RECOVERY

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THE BUFFALO THEORY

(In one episode of 'Cheers', Cliff is seated at the bar describing the Buffalo Theory to his buddy, Norm. I don't think I've ever heard the concept explained any better than this...)

"Well you see, Norm, it's like this... A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members.

In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Now, as we know, excessive intake of alcohol kills brain cells. But naturally, it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster more efficient machine.

And that, Norm, is why you always feel smarter after a few beers."

Letter to Bill From Carl Jung

- Dear Mr. Wilson

Your letter has been very welcome indeed.

I had no news from Roland H. anymore and often wondered what has been his fate. Our conversation which he has adequately reported to you had an aspect of which he did not know. The reason that I could not tell him everything was that those days I had to be exceedingly careful of what I said. I had found out that I was misunderstood in every possible way. Thus I was very careful when I talked to Roland H. But what I really thought about was the result of many experiences with men of his kind.

His craving for alcohol was the equivalent, on a low level, of the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness, expressed in medieval language: the union with God.*

Letter to Bill From Carl Jung

- How could one formulate such an insight in a language that is not misunderstood in our days?

The only right and legitimate way to such an experience is that it happens to you in reality and it can only happen to you when **you walk on a path which leads you to higher understanding**. You might be led to that goal by an act of grace or through a personal and honest contact with friends, or through a higher education of the mind beyond the confines of mere rationalism. I see from your letter that Roland H. has chosen the second way, which was, under the circumstances, obviously the best one.

I am strongly convinced that the evil principle prevailing in this world leads the unrecognized spiritual need into perdition, if it is not counteracted either by real religious insight or by the protective wall of human community. An ordinary man, not protected by an action from above and isolated in society, cannot resist the power of evil, which is called very aptly the Devil. But the use of such words arouses so many mistakes that one can only keep aloof from them as much as possible.

Letter to Bill From Carl Jung

- These are the reasons why I could not give a full and sufficient explanation to Roland H., but I am risking it with you because I conclude from your very decent and honest letter that you have acquired a point of view above the misleading platitudes one usually hears about alcoholism.

You see, "alcohol" in Latin is "spiritus" and you use the same word for the highest religious experience as well as for the most depraving poison. The helpful formula therefore is: spiritus contra spiritum.

Thanking you again for your kind letter

I remain

Yours sincerely

C. G. Jung

ORIGINS OF ADDICTIONS AND EMOTIONAL SICKNESS (SUFFERING)

- Think of the physical, biological brain as a large computer (**hardware**)
- Throughout life (especially early life) this computer is programmed with **software**
- **Software (mind or Ego) consists of all of opinions, motives and positionalities that one possesses**
- Each time you remove a software program you get closer to TRUTH (SELF)

ORIGINS OF ADDICTIONS AND EMOTIONAL SICKNESS (SUFFERING)

- BELIEF THAT OUR PERSONALITY IS THE ESSENCE OF WHO WE ARE
- BELIEF THAT HAPPINESS IS OUTSIDE THE SELF
- INABILITY TO STAY CONSCIOUSLY IN THE MOMENT
- PERSONAL AND MATERIAL ATTACHMENTS

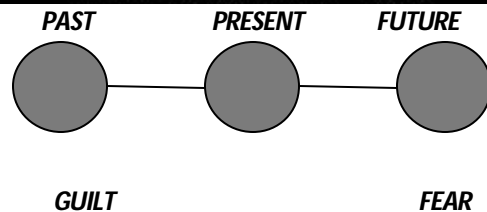
BELIEF THAT OUR PERSONALITY IS THE ESSENCE OF WHO WE ARE

- The more one is in touch with SELF
- The more SELF can constellate SELF in others
 - THIS RECONTEXTUALIZES PATIENT'S REALITY SO THEY EXPERIENCE HEALING ON A LEVEL THAT TRANSCENDS THE EGO (Source of all Suffering)
- THE COMPASSION OF THE PRESENCE (SELF) ALLOWS FOR THE FEELING OF LOVE PRODUCING PEACE WITHIN AND REMOVING INNER AGONY

BELIEF THAT HAPPINESS IS OUTSIDE THE SELF

- PROMISE OF THE EGO
 - IT WILL BRING HAPPINESS"
- SEEKS HAPPINESS OUTSIDE OF SELF
- HAPPINESS IS A PART OF ONE'S ESSENCE-IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE
- ALCOHOL AND DRUGS ARE NOT THE WRONG DIRECTIONS BUT ARE THE WRONG METHODS

THE CONCEPT OF TIME



INABILITY TO STAY CONSCIOUSLY IN THE MOMENT

- THE FARTHER AWAY ONE IS FROM THE MOMENT THE MORE THE SUFFERING
 - FEAR (ANXIETY) IS GENERALLY ABOUT THE FUTURE
 - GUILT AND SHAME (DEPRESSION) IS GENERALLY ABOUT THE PAST

PERSONAL AND MATERIAL ATTACHMENTS

- BUDDHISM-ALL SUFFERING IS DUE TO ATTACHMENTS AND IGNORANCE
- ATTACHMENTS TO...
 - PEOPLE
 - THINGS (FOOD, DRUGS, WORK)

ALCOHOL/DRUGS
WORK
WORK

EGO

ENDLESS
SUFFERING

EGO

- FEEDS OFF OF...
 - UNHAPPINESS
 - MARTYRDOM
 - GUILT
 - INJUSTICE
 - BEING THE VICTIM
- SECONDARY GAINS

PRIDE OF THE EGO

- **Inflated EGO is vulnerable to attack**
 - Can be deflated into shame
 - Positions must be defended
- **High profile creates need for constant vigilance and defense**
 - Paranoia
- **Arrogance, personal superiority and denial block ability to grow**

PRIDE OF THE EGO

- **Image swings on success and failure**
 - Vulnerable to depression
- **Pride=Self-Admiration**
 - Implies others are inferior
 - "Specialness" triggers resentment in others
- **Recovery is impossible because character defects are denied**

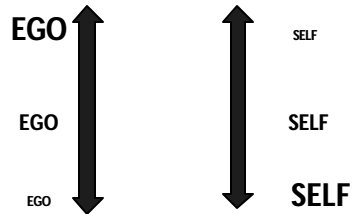
DESIRE

- **Excessive Desire comes from an inner feeling of "lack" leading to...**
 - Constant seeking
 - Chronic dissatisfaction
 - Feelings of being incomplete
- **Inner feeling of "wanting" leads to**
 - Frustration
 - Anxiety
 - Greed
 - Avarice

DESIRE

- **There is a hopefulness about the human spirit that sometimes will not accept "no"**
- **Desire as a natural response to the reality of suffering**
- **Desire is vitality, energy and motivation**
- **Desire involves a drive for transcendence**
 - **SUBLIMATE**

THE EGO TO SELF RATIO



12-STEP RECOVERY AND EGO DEFLATION

- **Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous**
 - **1st Step**- We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable.
 - **2nd Step**- Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity
 - **3rd Step**- Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood him.*

Hopeless

- **Treatment**
 - **Need energy from outside**
 - Love and carefrontation
 - Gender differences
 - Therapeutic relationship
 - Friendship

Treatment Of Fear (Anger)

- ◆ **Want energy but not feeling**
- ◆ **Disassemble**
 - **Physical symptoms**
 - Can you handle them?
 - **Emotional symptoms**
 - Can you handle them?
- ◆ **Not experiencing fear just a bunch of symptoms**
- ◆ **"Fear is not you, it is just a symptom"**

Treatment Of Fear (Anger)

- ◆ **"You are bigger than your fears."**
- ◆ **Anger and other outward expressions of fear represents a need to control what feels unmanageable**
 - **PARADOX**
- ◆ **"Your fear and anger give people control over you"**
- ◆ **"When you lose the fear of fear the world cannot control you!"**

THE SPIRITUAL TOOLS

- **HUMILITY**
- **SURRENDER**
- **FORGIVENESS**
- **LOVE**
- **HONESTY**
- **GRATITUDE**
- **APPRECIATION**
- **KINDNESS**
- **SELFLESS-SERVICE (ALTRUISM)**

SPIRITUAL TOOL-HUMILITY

- **The limitations of the mind**
 - Often cannot tell essence
 - Mind left to its own will make mistakes
 - Mind can only know "about"
- **Empowering (Not a Weakness)**
 - Relieves the guilt that accompanies doubt and denial
 - Egos belief that it knows Reality results in pride and defensiveness
 - Ignorance is guarded by egocentricity

SPIRITUAL TOOL-HUMILITY

- **Opens up the door to knowledge**
 - Attitude of inquiry
 - Sermon On The Mount (Lost/Found)
- **Humility as altruism**
 - Not holding oneself above others
 - Treating others as if they were oneself
- **One is a student...Not on a pedestal**

SPIRITUAL TOOL-SURRENDER

- **Surrender is not about giving up or giving in to the wishes of another.** It is about accepting the moment at hand and realizing there is Perfection within the moment. It is the power to accept each moment for what it is rather than yearning for it to be something else. More often than not, our minds want us to believe that the past "should not" have been the way it was and that we do not deserve what the past gave to us or what the future may hold. Our mind, reflects over and over how it should have been or it takes us on a journey into the future of which we could never predict.

SPIRITUAL TOOL-SURRENDER

- **It is about living each moment as it comes and not worrying about what has taken place in the past or what may happen in the future.** It is about being certain that each moment of your life is being lived exactly as it is supposed to be to learn the lessons you were brought here to learn. If in the state of surrender than the truest thoughts are always, "Thy will be done."

12-STEP RECOVERY AND EGO DEFLATION

- **Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous**
 - **4th Step-** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
 - **5th Step-** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
 - **6th Step-** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

12-STEP RECOVERY AND EGO DEFLATION

- **Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous**
 - **7th Step-** Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
 - **8th Step-** Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
 - **9th Step-** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

TREATMENT OF GUILT

- Guilt as opposed to lack thereof (ASPD)
- Humility-admitting one's errors
- We did the best we could with what we had at the time given the circumstances
 - Reframe
- What did we learn from the experience?

TREATMENT OF GUILT

- ◆ To transcend
 - Change context
 - Who you were
 - Who you are now
 - Who you will become if you stay the path
 - See as part of learning and development & therefore unavoidable maybe even critical
 - Make amends
 - Self-forgiveness, humility and acceptance of limits

SPIRITUAL TOOL-FORGIVENESS

- Is not the same as absolution.
- We surrender and forgive to get rid of resentments
- **Forgiveness** is the mental and/or spiritual process of ceasing to feel resentment, indignation or anger against another person for a perceived offense, difference or mistake, or ceasing to demand punishment or restitution.

Acceptance

- "And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation-some fact of my life-unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy." Big Book, pg 417 new edition, pg 449, old edition

12-STEP RECOVERY AND EGO DEFLATION

- Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous
 - **10th Step**- Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
 - **11th Step**- Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we *understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12-STEP RECOVERY AND EGO DEFLATION

- ◆ **12th Step**- Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs
 - ◆ No changing of mind as now committed to the course

12th Step- "Joy of Living"

- **Unconditional love**
 - "The kind of love that has no price tag on it." (12 and 12, pg106)
- **Divine paradox is "Giving it away to keep it."**
- **No greater joy than 12th step work**
 - Sit in meetings to give reassurance and support
 - Reach out when others are in need
 - Carry the message
 - Arranging after meeting get-togethers

12th Step-"Joy of Living"

- **Caution regarding a "spiritual ego"**
 - Trying to control others
 - Tradition 2-"one ultimate authority"
 - Telling people they need to work a program just like yours
 - Trying to control meetings
 - Attachment to 12th step work outcomes

12th Step- "Joy of Living"

- **Practicing these principles in all our affairs**
 - Can we be helpful to all?
 - Can we carry the spirit into our daily work?
 - Can we find a new joy in living?
 - Can we be content with a humble life style?
 - Have we given up our dependence on others for emotional security?
 - Have we given up our need to control others?
 - Have we given up blaming others for our shortcomings?



References

- <http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/templates/PressReleases.aspx?articleid=115&zoid=48>
- <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1526775#R133>
- Rossi, Ernest. *The Psychobiology of Gene Expression*. WW Norton, New York, 2002

Mutual Support Groups

- Women for Sobriety -- <http://www.womenforsobriety.org/>
SOS -- <http://www.sossobriety.org/>
SMART Recovery -- <http://www.smartrecovery.org/>
LifeRing Secular Recovery -- <http://www.unhooked.com/index.htm>

Mutual Support Groups

- Fundamentalist Christian MSGs like Alcoholics Victorious (<http://www.alcoholicsvictorious.org/>) and Christians in Recovery (<http://christians-in-recovery.org/>)
- For Moslems we have: (<http://www2.islamicity.com/al-muminun/MIFAX/mifax.htm>)

Mutual Support Groups

- Dual Recovery Anonymous (DRA) at <http://draonline.org/>.
- dual recovery program for Wiccans <http://www.pagansanctumrecovery.org/>.
- Faces and Voices of Recovery (FaVoR) maintains an MSG section at http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/resources/support_home.php

UK AA PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

- <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.UK/newcomer/videoh.shtml> >

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