



Leaving the Rest: Gay Men on Alcoholism and Sobriety

Leslie L. Smith (Editor)

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Collected for the first time in two decades are 22 personal essays by sober gay men about the wide spectrum of experiences particular to being a gay alcoholic, including experiences leading to and following recovery.

Leaving the Rest: Gay Men on Alcoholism and Sobriety Details

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From Reader Review Leaving the Rest: Gay Men on Alcoholism and Sobriety for online ebook

Jim says

Loved this anthology of sober stories because it was my tribe - gay men in big cities, for the most part, and I understand this "creature." Like the editor said, there are really no stories like this in AA's Big Book - that are so frank about how gay men live their lives, and that are not totally AA rah rah all the time.

The one thing I would say is that the book was not proofread - as a writing professional, this really irks me. Even if this was self-published or small press, it's a necessary task.

Urban Gay Men and women - though there are no lesbian stories here - will respond to this, I think.

Lori Perkins says

This book is as fantastic as much as it is uplifting. The stories of these men's struggles with addiction and how they came through on the other side makes for a remarkable read.

Kylan says

Really it should be 3 and a half stars.

What I liked most about this book was that it wasn't all roses and biblical leanings and one line mantra's. There really were several stories that told how hard it was to be a gay alcoholic or drug addict. There was anger, frustration, confusion and a lot (A LOT) of honesty. What I appreciated about the honesty was that, while some guys rattled on, some really made their point quite clear and in fact, I found myself relating to a few of their insecurity issues. They didn't belittle it with trivial conceptions; instead they really delved in to what was making them drink into a drunken stupor.

There's a lot of men talking about sex as well. And for the non-judgemental prude that I am, I was a lil taken aback by what some guys did sexually. And then I became intrigued and curious as they explained quite openly about why they engaged thus.

Sure, the editors could have done a better job with some mistakes, but one can understand the stories.

Thanks to McCartney as well for making me aware of this book.

Jimmy says

I enjoyed all the stories. Some depict unorthodox recovery programs, and I like to see how each individual's is different. Well worth the buy.

Colin says

While Leaving the Rest could use a good deal of stronger writing and proofreading, it is a good step forward for gay men in recovery. The story that struck me as most important in this collection was Edge's "A Sober Leatherman"; Mike C's "We Try to Grow" and Jay C's "No Longer a Disgrace" are valuable, too. These three stories qualify my three-star review -- otherwise, check out the Grapevine's newest collection of articles on LGBTs in recovery. More OFFENSIVELY, Leaving the Rest offers Peter Joshua's "For Gay Boy Who Want to Try Meth", Scott Alexander Hess's "Recovering My Sexuality", and the editor's contribution, "Things I Know Better Now."

Peter Joshua -- a supposedly well-known writer (perhaps using a pseudonym) -- reveals how he harmlessly fell into his meth addiction, believing what he consumed at a sex party was crack, not meth. After all, crack is harmless at sex parties, right! He visits a therapist who tells him, "I was wrong to put you in a group [AA]. It wasn't right for you then, and it's not right for you now." Uh, is this therapist certified? Even in non-Twelve Step recovery, group therapy plays a role in clients' remaining clean and sober. Finally, Joshua speaks with a writer-friend in the same meth-fueled boat who believes, like Joshua, that their lives are "both too public and too private to deal with groups." I wonder how Robert Downy, Jr, Anthony Hopkins, Kristen Johnson, etc.

Leslie Smith -- who uses a line from his story to title the collection -- decides after 20+ years and a stagnant program that he "needed to be a newcomer." Smith believes that because he still had a desire not to drink, he was doing what AA asked of him. Instead, he uses other chemicals -- often during sex -- and doesn't regret it. What he regrets is "the loss of my faculties, the unproductive time in which I am less than my best, less sharp than the me I know. I regret the recovery period when my mind just won't work as I know it should." Really? Mind-altering chemicals tend to do that!

Scott Alexander Hess -- clearly a sex addict, too (pardon my taking others' inventories) -- "sucked cocks. Lots of cocks." His contribution to this collection doesn't need much detail. But for the curious, "2 a.m. I'm leaning into the door, naked, stroking my penis to keep it hard with one hand and holding the peep-hole knob up with another. I cannot take another dreary man, or an old man, or a tantric slave who tells me I'm sad." I'm sad this came from a recovery book and not amateur porn.

Could you imagine coming across these stories in Alcoholics Anonymous? Sure, they're realistic. They detail the lives of AA members who are "constitutionally incapable of being honest" -- members who drop out of recovery. These stories stress my gratefulness that I am sober today, but for someone new in recovery or someone else stumbling, they suggest that some situations are valid excuses to use or drink. In REALITY, no excuse suffices.
