



Sane: Mental Illness, Addiction, and the 12 Steps

Marya Hornbacher

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Marya Hornbacher, author of the international best-sellers *Madness* and *Wasted*, offers an enlightening examination of the Twelve Steps for those with co-occurring addiction and mental health disorders.

In this beautifully written recovery handbook, *New York Times* best-selling author Marya Hornbacher applies the wisdom earned from her struggle with a severe mental illness and addiction to offer an honest and illuminating examination of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous for those with co-occurring addiction and mental health disorders.

Relaying her recovery experiences, and those of the people with whom she has shared her journey, Hornbacher guides readers through the maze of special issues that make working each Step a unique challenge for those with co-occurring disorders.

She addresses the difficulty that many with a mental illness have with finding support in a recovery program that often discourages talk about emotional problems, and the therapy and medication that they require. At the same time, Hornbacher reveals how the Twelve Steps can offer insights, spiritual sustenance, and practical guidance to enhance stability for those who truly have to approach sanity and sobriety one day at a time.

Sane: Mental Illness, Addiction, and the 12 Steps Details

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From Reader Review Sane: Mental Illness, Addiction, and the 12 Steps for online ebook

Vickie says

Incredibly informative, interesting and insightful.

Ashley says

"When we lack hope, we limit ourselves. We don't work on our character because we don't believe it's worth the effort. We think our character is flawed beyond repair and that we're destined to fail." pg 77-78.

Mriaje Buchanan says

Loaned to a friend - haven't finished but great what I read

Mary Beth says

This isn't just a 12 step book, having never been a fan of AA programs.... the 12 steps are another. This maps it out brilliantly for those with Co Occurring disorders which is very hard to get from an AA meeting. She was able to do both. She also helped to define the "higher power" issue, that being other than God, for those that don't want Religion shoved down their throat... She is an amazing writer, and her truths she bares in this book are beyond helpful and necessary for those with more than addiction ...

Melinda chrisman says

I want to read this book so bad but I can not afford it I suffer from bipolar

Ana says

Thank you Marya for writing a book I have been searching for for years. Finally, a book on recovery/sobriety with an emphasis on mental illness. I've read many recovery books in the past and none have seemed to mention dual diagnosis or the tremendous difficulty mental illness places on a person's recovery.

Reading this book was like finding my Higher Power. Every word I read hit home, and it just felt right. It was like fate that I found this book, and Hornbacher is one of my favorite authors as well so when I found out she wrote it, I was overjoyed.

It's a great read, very informative and powerful. As someone who struggles with the spiritual and/or religious aspect of recovery, especially within the 12 Steps, this book really helped calm my doubts. She addresses it in such a way that really makes you believe in the forces out there that are greater than ourselves.

Definitely recommend this book if you are struggling with addiction and a co-occurring mental illness. It sheds light on this struggle in such a graceful way, and has really brought hope back into my life after feeling so incredibly hopeless for so long due to the weight of my mental illness.

This book honestly may have saved my life. I'm still struggling with addiction, but at least now I see that there is in fact hope for people like me. It's just a matter of really putting in the work.

It works if you work it, right?

Cedricsmom says

Marya Hornbacher pulls no punches in her book SANE: MENTAL ILLNESS, ADDICTION, AND THE 12 STEPS. This is recovery for the "dual diagnosed." She gives her honest take on what step work, recovery, and the struggles the mentally ill face in recovery. I'd say that for those with mental illness AND addiction, this is a bible for working the steps, a compassionate friend and companion to be always at your side. If I were bipolar, I'd trust her assessment because she has been through the mire and turned her life around.

Each chapter covers one step. Marya draws from AA's Big Book frequently and also AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and the Little Red Book. She sticks fairly close to the guidelines of the Big Book on the 4th step. Of step 7 she says she was "in no mood" to revisit her lists from Step 4, but she knew she had to do it, to face her past or end up "drinking and going insane again and again until it killed [her]."

I love how she voices her skepticism of the program's many slogans, promises, and what seems like hype and horse shit to many newcomers. But something kept drawing her back to the rooms, perhaps a belief that it was her last chance. In fact, the Big Book says that for many, AA is "the last house on the block." She also addresses the opinions of the un-informed in the rooms, those who don't understand that there's a huge difference between medication taken to regulate one's moods and sanity versus using mood and mind altering substances to get high or "take the edge off", as they say. This is crucial; I've sat through many a meeting where addicts get into it passionately about whether it's acceptable to take prescription drugs for ANY reason...it's a mess. Sadly, the loudest opponents in the room are often the least qualified to say anything on the topic. There's a lot of ignorance on this topic and Marya attempts to dispel that. At any rate, she encourages those who take psychotropic medications to control their mental illness NOT to be dissuaded from recovery by those in the rooms who are ignorant of mental illness's ravages and demands.

Marya is one tough chick, facing down her demons and winning. She's a recovery warrior and a good writer. This is the 3rd book I've read by her and I look forward to more updates from the field.

Jody says

It took me a long time to read this book, but every time I came back to it I was impressed all over again. Hornbacher did a great job of explaining how the 12 steps can work for someone with a mental illness.

(Considering how many alcoholics have dual diagnoses this should have wide appeal.) Her writing is pragmatic and honest and she has some great insights that I think would benefit anyone, mental illness or not, addiction or not.

Jenn says

Quick easy reference for those working the steps.

Laura says

Sane is an inspiring, hopeful book. Hornbacher has really calmed down, and I'm so happy for her.

I admit that I was expecting a book more like Madness, but I suppose it's clear by just the title that Sane would be much more serene. Neatly organized with each Step and a brief interlude, it's an excellent handbook. Even if you're not an addict, it's worth a read. The book holds important knowledge of growth, something surely worth everyone's while.

Angelique says

If you're trying to work a 12 Step program and have a mental health Dx - forget trying to navigate the journey w/out this book. When you're at Step 4 especially, you'll need this book to help you discern your mental illness symptoms, from your addiction, from your character defects and from your strengths. Unless you have Super Sponsor, you need this book. Even AA "bible" acknowledges it's harder to recover from addiction for those w/ mental illness unless you're willing to be ruthlessly honest - this is the tool that allows that honesty to unravel the mess addiction makes of our lives/minds/souls.

Daniel Currie says

I didn't know too much about the twelve step program so this was a good way of finding out about that. As a book I thought it was a bit vague a lot of the time and I think would have been helped by some more personal examples of how she dealt with this step or that step. It came across a bit theoretical for something that is intensely personal.

But there is a lot of good information in here.

Denise Huntington says

I've been in twelve-step programs for years and this book would be useful for those who may be trying to sponsor a newbie; those who are new to the program or are on the fence about whether the twelve-step program would work for them; and substance abuse counselors. It explains the twelve steps in thorough

detail and gives suggestions for how to countermand any arguments from those who are working the steps. I was disappointed not in the explanations or the writing (which is very well done, by the way) but because I thought it would have more of her own personal experience in getting sober and staying sober while dealing with her bi-polarity. I gave up after about half the book because I'm already quite familiar with the program and what the steps mean.
