

### Review of the month

## Living with a Problem Drinker

Rolande Anderson  
Sheldon Press 2010  
128pp  
ISBN: 9781847090911  
£7.99 (paperback)

Rolande Anderson is an alcohol and addiction counsellor with many years experience of treating problem drinkers. This experience has given him a clear understanding of the often devastating and long-term consequences for the partners and families of those who misuse alcohol. Written in an empathic but challenging way, this book is about helping people take control of their lives.

Accessible and concise, there is also a clear sense of the knowledge and practical experience of the author, both through anecdotal accounts of therapy sessions with actual patients, and the rhetorical questions that occur at regular intervals throughout the text. This style allows for a non-threatening exploration of the issues, questions and concerns common to those who live with problem drinkers, from the consideration of disease models, through emotional responses such as guilt and helplessness, to taking individual responsibility for one's own future.

The journey through the book starts with a classification of risky drinking and what this might mean in behavioural



terms, such as issues of control. The broad question of whether someone has an alcohol problem is addressed with the aid of verbatim accounts of familiar experiences. Coping strategies adopted by spouses are discussed in a non-judgemental and practical way. Similarly, the potentially problematic constructs of co-dependency and enmeshment are dealt with sensitively.

The third section of the book is devoted to seeking help—this includes contact details for many of the relevant support organisations, but also details the types of support and treatment available. Particularly useful is the account of what to expect from a treatment agency, which includes a checklist of what constitutes good practice, and the rights of a service user. As well as its potential for helping those directly affected by problem drinking, this book would also serve as a good introduction to non-specialist professionals who may be working with such families.

Bev John

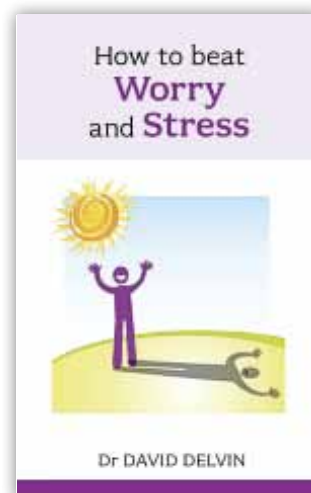
## How to Beat Worry and Stress

David Delvin  
Sheldon Press 2011  
128 pp  
ISBN: 9781847091291  
£7.99 (paperback)

Dr Delvin is a talented, stylish and coherent writer who combines his clinical experiences and subject knowledge to succinctly produce a self-help text that is informative yet accessible. He introduces the concepts of stress, anxiety, worry and the bodily symptoms that may accompany these presentations. In the first chapter, he sets distress in the context of hormonal and biochemical responses. Mindful of the possible cognitive functioning and concentration frame of the reader, he employs an engaging and conversational approach to simplify what may otherwise be difficult pathophysiological theories to grasp.

This empathic style continues as he offers further explanations into the possible causes of stress, anxiety and worry. Case studies are used to illustrate 'typical' presentations which form the basis for further commentary on predisposing, precipitating and perpetuating mechanisms that contribute to the maintenance of the vicious cycles of the distressing features. Having explored these cyclical issues and remaining sensitive, Delvin adopts a pragmatic approach and explores useful interventions for 'handling' both the immediate and potential future reoccurrences.

Chapter six offers a comprehensive explanation



of bodily symptoms, which no doubt will offer hope and would be reassuring to many who may otherwise think that their symptoms are indicative of a serious physical illness. The chapter, 'Medication isn't the answer', acknowledges that medication may be useful in the short term, the salient argument here is that it does not provide a permanent solution. The book concludes with chapters that outline psychological treatments with a specific focus on cognitive behaviour therapy in the final chapter.

This is an excellent empowering self-help book for patients who present with these issues. Clinicians will also find this text helpful as it will socialise clients and complement the approaches that they employ in their practice, while simultaneously providing frameworks of reference and understanding for students. Finally, if you are a little rusty on your pathophysiology, then this accessible text may be just what the doctor ordered!

Thomas Currid

## Modern Living, Holistic Health and Herbal Medicine: Improving Health and Well-Being with Herbs and Lifestyle Changes

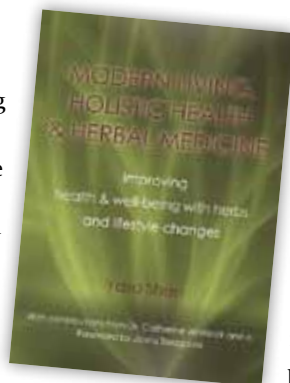
**Yaso Shan**  
**Booklocker Inc 2010**  
**244 pp**  
**ISBN: 9781609106393**  
**£18.88 (paperback)**

This book is timely as it reflects consumer concern about the side-effects of orthodox drugs, a concomitant desire for knowledge about one's own health and a consequently growing demand for herbal medicine. It is not just another herbal medicine book. It provides an insight into the basis of ill health and a guide to lifestyle and dietary alterations fundamental to health and wellbeing. The author, an experienced medical herbalist, does not condemn conventional medicine but provides invaluable guidance to those who desire an alternative

approach when appropriate.

Basic functioning and coordination of body systems are described, with an explanation of how an imbalance can result in illness. Throughout the book there is an emphasis on the link between the physical state of the body and mental wellbeing and the management of stress with an integrated and holistic approach. The links between health and disease are explained in numerous well-structured tables.

For the uninitiated the book includes a succinct overview of the principles and practice of herbal medicine and the actions and indications of 20 popular herbs are described.



There is also an interesting potted history of western herbal medicine that will appeal to the seasoned medical herbalist. The chapter on health essentials is excellent and provides valuable information on

strategies for maintenance of optimum wellbeing.

Importantly, there is advice on buying good quality herbs. An issue in the herbal medicines market is poor quality control, which can have serious consequences for the consumer and for herbal practice as a whole. However, the book is not intended as a self-help guide. The author stresses the importance of consulting a medical herbalist and gives

warnings of the potential dangers of self-medication with herbs.

I would recommend this book but I have some minor reservations. The A-Z section of common ailments features some unnecessary and confusing repetition. Additionally, it would have been helpful to include a full bibliography. A list of Latin names of mentioned herbs would have been useful and herb illustrations would enhance its visual appeal. Overall, this book is an enjoyable read. It contains a wealth of information in an easy-to-read format for the lay person interested in a natural path to good health yet also offers basic knowledge to the herbal medicine undergraduate and a handy revision text for the herbal practitioner.

**Christine Brock**

## My Journey Home:

A collection of poetry, artwork and photography embracing the theme of recovery from severe depression

**Lorraine Nicholson**  
**2011**  
**Available for purchase from:**  
**[www.hope4recovery.co.uk](http://www.hope4recovery.co.uk)**

Another beautiful book by Lorraine Nicholson also deals with the subject of depression but through the medium of poetry, art and imagery. This book will have pride of place in any collection for its aesthetic qualities alone. It is beautiful to behold with thoughtfully

placed photographs, and reproductions of original art. Nicholson says that she hit rock bottom at the age of 40 having starved her body and soul. She claims that electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) saved her life but at the same time her descent into depression was necessary to enable her inner voice to be heard. Lorraine appears to accept that her experience is



part of an illness but nevertheless her poetry and art provides an alternative subtext of sense making. The bleakness, and

desolation associated with darker times is palpable in the early pieces, but this gives way to hopeful and optimistic pieces.

Some pages are simply embellished with musings, affirmations or reflections. I felt privileged to be welcomed into Lorraine's world. I'm uncertain, whether the poetry could be put to music but in this instance the visual imagery elevates the written word. This book could proudly adorn any coffee table and its treasures sampled at leisure. It does inspire hope.

**Richard Lakeman**