

What Readers Are Saying

"Offers a sensible and doable discipline for anyone serious about getting free of drugs and alcohol, regardless of personal beliefs." -- Doug Althaus M.Ed., LCDC-II, MAC, CRC; author of *You Can Free Yourself From Alcohol & Drugs*

"I could not put it down. The book is engaging, touching, and at the same time quite informative -- a must read for the addict and non-addict alike." -- Asma Asyyed MD, Berkeley, California

"Very much enjoyed it. Sharp, clear and often lighthearted, the writing is a pleasure. The historical discussion was very interesting to me, not something I've ever looked into." -- Toni B., San Francisco

"An excellent tool for recovery, particularly for those put off by the concepts of 'powerlessness' and 'higher power.'" -- Ralph Cantor, Coordinator of Drug Prevention at the Alameda County Office of Education, Hayward, California

"This is an eloquently written, audience-friendly piece of work that truly engages the reader from the first page to the last. The book chronicles the emergence of LifeRing—a promising alternative to AA but without powerlessness, insanity, the supernatural, and other elements of AA that have deterred millions from participating in self-help groups. Through a medley of inspiring accounts of personal triumph, revelations of the peculiar historical evolution of AA, along with the results of empirical studies, Nicolaus reveals the remarkable power of the human spirit over the pharmacological properties of alcohol and other drugs. Masterfully done." -
- William Cloud PhD, MSW, Professor, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Denver, Colorado; co-author of *Coming Clean: Overcoming Addiction Without Treatment*

"Thank you for this new book! I could not put it down. This book did just what it was meant to do -- bring me back to myself and realize how I got where I am at this time. It's a God-send." -- Bettye D., 7 years clean in LifeRing, Nashville TN

“In a field where most treatment is driven by myth, politics, and ideological dogma, Nicolaus’ book is a breath of fresh air. It is well written, contemporary, research based and client centered; it will without a doubt help people find recovery who would otherwise become lost.” -- Dr. B J Davis, Clinical Director, Strategies for Change, Sacramento, California

"Using the best thinking and best science, Empowering Your Sober Self examines what works and what doesn't, and provides new hope and new solutions for anyone who craves a sober life, but can't make a go of it in the 12-step world. The book is well-written to boot, full of smart prose, great good humor, sparkling analogies, and fascinating nuggets of history and science." -- Matt Dean, software developer, web designer

"Recovery is a journey that requires courage and inner strength and, most often, the support of others. Empowering Your Sober Self describes critical components of this journey as it introduces the reader to the LifeRing approach to addiction recovery. Drawing from his own experiences and highlighting the experiences of many others who have found LifeRing support groups and approaches useful on their journey, Nicolaus offers hope and challenges some central tenets about addictions that he believes can interfere with leaving the addicted self and finding the sober self. He offers a sane and secular approach to seeking sobriety and a sophisticated, insightful, and well documented view of the philosophy and practice that are at the heart of this LifeRing approach. This book offers a perspective on recovery that can motivate change in clinicians and researchers as well as among individuals struggling to find their sober selves." - Carlo DiClemente Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Department of Psychology, University of Maryland, Baltimore; author of Addiction and Change: How Addictions Develop and Addicted People Recover; co-author of the Transtheoretical Model of Change

"True life recovery stories skillfully interwoven with theories about addiction and practical advice on how to overcome it." -- CA Edington, 10 years sober through LifeRing, Sapporo, Japan

"This introduction to LifeRing Secular Recovery’s principles [and] philosophy for overcoming addiction—without the religious underpinnings of most 12-step programs—will be well received by those seeking support on their road to recovery. Highly recommended for university libraries supporting the helping professions and larger public libraries. Background: Nicolaus (Recovery by Choice), founder and CEO of LifeRing Secular Recovery, a nonreligious addiction recovery treatment alternative to Alcoholics Anonymous, provides an engaging guide for individuals and addiction treatment professionals seeking nonspiritual support and strategies. The author distinguishes LifeRing Secular Recovery from 12-step programs, includes numerous testimonials

from members, and focuses on informing readers rather than converting them."—Dale Farris, Groves, TX, in Library Journal 3/27/09, <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6645676.html>

"With impressive analytical clarity and therapeutic generosity, Nicolaus presents a well-argued brief for understanding the complexities of addiction treatment and accepting the full range of diverse paths to recovery. The data on recovery and the biological, social and genetic interactions in addiction are well presented in this brief well-written text. Professionals in the field and laymen wanting insight and balance on a vitally important public health issue will appreciate the author's lively and respectful presentation." -- Judith Herman MD, author of Trauma and Recovery.

"Reducing the addict self by itself has no effect unless the sober self grows and fills the gap.' Martin Nicolaus' new book, a compilation of stories and principles to assist recovery, fills the gap for those who wish to avoid 12-step programs and the mythos of disempowerment." -- David A. Kaiser Ph.D., Editor, Journal of Neurotherapy

"Provides a compelling analysis of the philosophy of LifeRing and how it compares to Alcoholics Anonymous. Readers will learn a great deal about the implications of the disease concept of alcoholism (to the alcohol industry, to coverage for treatment, and to the social stigma of addiction), of powerlessness (versus a healthy respect for addiction), and of the genetics of addiction." -- Lee Ann Kaskutas Dr.P.H., Senior Scientist, Alcohol Research Group, Emeryville, California

"Powerful, engaging, and scientific. Marty Nicolaus shows that the sober self emerges by focusing on a person's strength, intelligence, supportive relationships, and the ability to ask, what works? I highly recommend this excellent book to all people dealing with addictions and compulsive behavior." -- Charlotte Sophia Kasl, author of Many Roads, One Journey: Moving Beyond the 12 Steps; Yes, You Can! Overcoming Trauma and Addiction with Love, Strength and Power; If the Buddha Dated.

"Reinforces the view that the brain's reward systems are usurped by drug addiction and is a strong argument for linking mechanisms of recovery with the concept that addiction is a disease of the brain." -- George F. Koob Ph.D., The Scripps Research Institute, La Jolla, California

"An excellent, well-written work, appropriate for all audiences -- treatment providers, clients, as well as the general public. Its uniqueness consists in the fact that it presents an alternative to many other treatment approaches to substance abuse. Especially valuable is its explication of the non-religious, neutral approach which is so sorely lacking in the field of substance abuse treatment, research, and prevention. An excellent and interesting read. -- John Langrod Ph.D., ACSW, APA Chair, Governing Board, South Bronx Mental Health Council, Inc. Bronx, New York

"I stayed up until midnight reading and I'm really impressed." -- Jean L., Fresno CA

"LifeRing's approach was the greatest gift I could ever give to my young family – if you are a parent who drinks, please give yourself a gift and read this book." -- Trish M., Pacifica, California

"Many people in recovery who are searching for an alternative to the disease model of addiction and the 12-Step program will find the LifeRing approach to be an interesting path to follow." -
- G. Alan Marlatt Ph.D., Director, Addictive Behaviors Research Center, University of Washington, Seattle

"Finally an author who understands that an individual's success in recovery starts with the option of choice. There is no wrong way to sobriety, just one that is wrong for me." -- Garry Mehlhorn, Ontario, Canada (sober 3 years)

"Finally, a respectful approach to persons caught in addiction. Nicolaus has given us another option in the heroic battle people fight to regain the wholeness which addiction compromises." --
The Rev. Linda Mercadante Ph.D., Straker Professor of Historical Theology, The Methodist Theological School in Ohio; author of *Victims & Sinners: Spiritual Roots of Addiction and Recovery* and *Bloomfield Avenue: A Jewish-Catholic Jersey Girl's Spiritual Journey*.

"Introduces a new, rational approach to addiction recovery, grounded in secularity, and informed by modern science. The LifeRing program mobilizes the power of caring and connection to liberate the sober self that lives inside everyone who struggles with addiction." -- Tom Moon MFT; columnist, San Francisco Bay Times

"Truly groundbreaking. A must read for addiction professionals, people suffering from addictions and their loved ones." -- Lorraine Robinson LSW, Executive Director, Ka Hale Ho'ala Hou No Na Wahine (The Home of Reawakening for Women), Honolulu, Hawaii.

"Vital reading for anyone engaged in addiction treatment and recovery. I have no doubt that it will be celebrated as an important resource for professionals and individuals who truly wish to explore innovative self-management recovery options." -- Madalynn C. Rucker, Executive Director, ONTRACK Program Resources, California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, Technical Assistance & Training Contractor

"We badly need more roads to recovery. Nicolaus' book details one such road: positive, empathetic, down to earth -- and a great read." -- Lonny Shavelson M.D., author of Hooked: Five addicts challenge our misguided drug rehab system

"I just finished reading "Empowering Your Sober Self" and am speechless. I can't wait to hear the opinion of [our local treatment program's] IOP director, who, by the way, LOVES the Recovery by Choice workbook. And she's a real 12 step gal! I've read my share of recovery literature, and believe this to be the finest resource available. It gives hope to those who were told that because of their reluctance to embrace a dogma inconsistent with their own values, that sobriety was beyond their reach. It also assures treatment professionals that LifeRing is a rock-solid method of maintaining a sober life. I think this book will give them a greater level of comfort in referring clients to us. I'm convinced that LifeRing saved my sodden butt; and consider it a joyful responsibility to do my bit to bring it to others. This book will enable me to do a better job in representing our life-saving organization." -- Mary S., LifeRing convenor

"It doesn't matter whether it is a black cat or a white cat. As long as it can catch mice, it is a good cat.' This is the statement and philosophy of Deng Xiaoping, the de facto leader of China in the 1980's and early 1990's, and the architect of the economic explosion that has converted it into the powerhouse that it remains today. 'Different strokes for different folks' is a terser statement of the same pragmatic approach. My institution has had the good fortune to have both 12 step meetings and LifeRing meetings taking place each week within its walls, as long-term supports for addicted patients who had undergone detoxification and/or outpatient therapy here. Some addicts gravitate to one program, some to the other, and some to both. But the presence of LifeRing meetings in our halls has been nothing but helpful and gets repeated high marks from those who attend. Its emphasis on 'cross-talk' gives valuable feedback to participants, many of whom struggle with opening up to others. I hope that it becomes more widespread, as it is popular among our patients, many of whom 'keep on coming.' Martin Nicolaus, one of LifeRing's founding members, has written a lucid explanation of its approach, philosophy and

what it has meant to him and to others. I believe this book will be very helpful to both treating professionals and to many who continue to struggle with addictions. No one approach has all the answers, but this book certainly has many of them." -- George Ubogy M.D., Medical Director, Addiction Recovery Center, Greenwich Hospital, Greenwich, Connecticut

"In the words of our president, 'it's time for a change' and nowhere is this more evident than in the field of addiction treatment. Nicolaus has written a wonderful book that presents LifeRing, a new model for self-help groups. A model based on empathy, scientific evidence, and giving people the power make their own choices about treatment options. Indeed, change has come." -
- Joseph R. Volpicelli M.D., Ph.D., Executive Director of the Institute of Addiction Medicine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and co-author of Recovery Options: The Complete Guide.

"I read Empowering Your Sober Self (EYSS) cover-to-cover, twice! I want you to know how much I learned from and enjoyed it. Truly, EYSS is so clearly written and offers a great balance of exposition, analysis, practical tools, and personal testimonials. I enjoyed all of these parts, including learning about the LifeRing philosophy and strategies. I also enjoyed the discussion of recovery (programs) in relation to Christian dogma, brain-based research, disease theories of addictions, public health strategies, and more. EYSS is a great read. I've ordered the Recovery by Choice workbook and EYSS for my personal library and to share with others." -- Deb W., librarian

"Thoughtful and provocative -- issues a long overdue challenge to the accepted wisdom surrounding recovery from addiction, and illuminates a viable, alternative perspective on recovery." -- Sarah E. Zemore Ph.D., Scientist, Alcohol Research Group, Emeryville California