

The power of powerlessness: The role of spiritual surrender and interpersonal confession in the treatment of addictions.

The Power of Powerlessness: The Role of Spiritual Surrender and Interpersonal Confession in the Treatment of Addictions

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Abstract:

Empirical studies regarding substance abuse in the Christian church are reviewed, and a psychological model, postulated as an analogous pathway for religious experiences and substance abuse, is examined as an explanation for addictive behaviors in certain populations. The article focuses on one element addressed by the analogous pathway model, common in many recovery programs, and derived from the core teachings of orthodox Christianity—spiritual surrender. The concept of spiritual surrender is defined, anchored in Christian Scripture, and identified through its roots in the contemplative Catholic tradition. The article examines integrated (spiritual/psychological) approaches to addiction recovery. The key role of interpersonal confession in addiction recovery is identified, and a psycho-spiritual approach to substance abuse and addiction treatment, revolving around spiritual surrender, interpersonal confession and penitential living, is considered.

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