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Book Review

Christopher Kennedy Lawford. *Recover to Live: Kick Any Habit, Manage Any Addiction, Conversations with 100 of the World's Top Treatment Experts*. Dallas Texas: BenBella Books. 367 pages, \$26.95.

Reviewed by William L. White

Finally, there is a science-grounded book about recovery for the general public that is written in language that does not require advanced degrees to understand. Christopher Kennedy Lawford's latest book distinguishes itself in two very important ways. First, it is the first contribution to clearly address within its covers what Lawford christens the seven "toxic compulsions"—alcohol use disorders, drug use disorders, eating disorders, gambling, hoarding, sex and pornography, and smoking (nicotine dependence)—and to chart their commonalities and interconnectedness. Second, no other book has assembled such a collection of long-tenured addiction scientists and clinical leaders to communicate so clearly and directly to the public.

My first introduction to Christopher Lawford was through two of his earlier books, *Symptoms of Withdrawal* (2005) and *Moments of Clarity* (2009), both of which signaled the rise of a new authentic and authoritative voice on addiction and recovery. Later, I would have the opportunity to personally meet and hear Christopher speak as a recovery advocate. The passion and insights that he exhibited on those occasions are ever-present in *Recovery to Live*.

Lawford's latest book will find many appreciative audiences. The individuals and families suffering and recovering from the problems addressed in *Recovery to Live* will find an encyclopedic review of what is known about such disorders and their treatment. The book also contains helpful self-assessment guides and menus of treatment choices and recovery tools. *Recovery to Live* is an important addition to a new niched genre of books on recovery aimed at the general public. Lawford's latest book will join other notable books (e.g., *Recovery Options*, 2000, by Joseph Volpicelli and Maia Szalavitz and *Inside Rehab*, forthcoming in 2013 by Anne Fletcher) in reaching people who do not have easy access to authoritative information on addiction and its treatment. One can expect a growing sophistication among people seeking help from professional treatment and recovery mutual aid organizations as a result of these contributions.

Recover to Live will also be read with great appreciation by treatment professionals who will relish the highly integrated perspectives on what have often been thought of as very distinct problems. The book also provides treatment professionals and policymakers the opportunity to

listen to the candid comments of scientists on the conclusions they have drawn from their work—quite a contrast to the often stilted, arcane, and equivocal language of scientific journals. Preventionists and public health specialists will also find much to commend *Recovery to Live*. The experts Lawford quotes do not always agree, but they do provide a window of access to some of the most important contemporary questions related to the sources and solutions to addictive disorders and related compulsions.

Lawford has done a commendable job of integrating the expert voices with his own experience to offer the reader a compelling narrative filled with hope and guidance.