



# Selected Papers of William L. White

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## Manhood and Addiction Recovery

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The collective experience—the “we”—from which the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) were formulated was distinctly masculine. In the intervening years, concerns about gender and AA have focused on the history of female pioneers in AA, feminist critiques of AA, research on recovery outcomes for women in AA, the growth of women’s meetings in AA, and explorations of the phenomenology of women’s recovery in AA. All of this scrutiny unfolded within the larger cultural context of an evolving “women’s movement,” which in turn spawned a multi-branched “men’s movement.”

A newly published book, *A Man’s Way Through the Twelve Steps* by Dan Griffin (2009, Center City, MN, Hazelden, 266 pages, \$14.95), is written within the tradition of this latter movement. This book is about “how men live as men” and how men live as men in addiction recovery. Griffin offers a personal guide through Twelve Step recovery, with a particular focus on men’s roles, men’s health, and the capacity of the Twelve Steps to spark processes of personal transformation that involve far more than the removal of alcohol and other drugs from men’s lives.

*A Man’s Way Through the Twelve Steps* will find appreciative audiences among men in recovery as well as the women and men living with men in recovery. I suspect the book will find its place in treatment centers and the newly spreading renewal centers and recovery community centers as a source for seminars or a recovery book club selection. Addiction professionals may find this book helpful as a recommended resource for some of their male clients. The book’s strength is in the breadth of issues addressed, the stories and voices of men in recovery, and the gentle guidance that is offered. It is at heart a book in which men in recovery share their “experience, strength, and hope” with other men. I greatly enjoyed this book and closed the last page with only two wishes: that the book would have used the lives of historical figures in recovery to illustrate some of its themes and that it would have included references to recent scientific literature that support its suggestions.

There is a growing professional and scientific interest in the long-term, lived experience of addiction recovery. Dan Griffin has added a valuable piece of literature on the phenomenology of addiction recovery among men.