

Book Description From the Publisher

What is Complete Recovery?

The definition of complete recovery continues to grow and expand with each person who adopts it as their process. In the essential experience of complete recovery: 1. we integrate many of the split-off aspects of ourselves so that we feel whole; 2. we reclaim our emotional, spiritual, and sexual wholeness; 3. we present ourselves to the world free of toxic shame; 4. we experience a rich open-hearted spiritual connection with ourselves, others, and the pulse of the universe; and 5. we identify more with our spirit than with our conditions, realizing that we are always larger than whatever our present challenges may be.

At the core of complete recovery is a state of being that is in a constant, conscious evolutionary process of completing itself. To the best of our ability we stay up to the moment in taking care of our inner and outer needs, continually discovering what those needs are. In this state one makes an effort to appropriately and authentically express the fullness of oneself. One knows what it is to have an open heart, and is conscious of when, how and where one chooses to experience this opening. In Chapter Eight you will read about the many rewards of this journey, each one continuing to define aspects of complete recovery, although your own definition will ultimately be more important than any others.

I'm aware that the concept of complete recovery may be jarring to those currently in programs based on total abstinence. The concept does not mean that one is cured of addictive tendencies but rather that one feels complete and whole as a human being, a being who is entitled to the joy of living and who can be authentic and sincere in their expression of it. This occurs when we have accepted and corrected unconscious self-delusions and integrated the many aspects of the self.

In the Twelve-Step programs it is said that anonymity is the spiritual foundation for each program, a tradition born in Alcoholics Anonymous. In Authentic Process Therapy, which leads to complete recovery, the foundation is the ongoing desire for completion, for feeling complete and whole and resolved concerning this lifetime and our purpose for being here. That is the binding spiritual glue that brings us together and makes the healing possible.

I sometimes think of this feeling of completion as always being prepared for the possibility of my demise. Have I done everything I needed to do? Are my relationships up-to-the-moment and emotionally complete to the best of my ability? Asking these questions helps us focus on our life as a whole to see exactly what remains unresolved. Far from being a death-wish, it is a buoyant freedom to live with. It is a gift I received from my several encounters with my mortality.

The following "promises" are excerpted from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the pivotal book that galvanized AA and inspired the other Twelve-Step programs: "We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word "serenity" and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will

change. Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

I, and many others in Twelve-Step programs, fully realized these promises only when we expanded our recovery objectives. Authentic Process Therapy is an expanded perspective which offers these additional tools.

In Authentic Process Therapy, we also expand on these promises: We will know true intimacy, and connect in meaningful ways with others. We will finally heal the schism between our spiritual and sexual nature. Fear of authority figures will disappear as we put our faith in an inner, higher authority. In presenting ourselves shame-free to the world, we will discover our purpose for being. We will realize that God is the Great Spirit within us and beyond us. When we open our hearts we will know that we are the Spirit, represented in an energetic feeling we call love. We will experience and know the feeling of complete recovery.

Similar to the Twelve-Step path to healing, this is a journey of attraction; grab onto it if it feels like a clear, safe, and secure path to where you want to go. Or, if you are lost and this direction seems more suitable for you than others, climb aboard. Bring yourself to it only if it feels right to you, and even then, take what works for you and leave what does not, remembering we all have different needs at different times. There is no right or wrong way to grow and evolve - there is only your way.

Today, recovering people are finding the emotional freedom to experience intimacy, joy, creativity, feelings of accomplishment, serendipity, and connection with spirit through Authentic Process Therapy and energetic healing. This freedom to experiment with joy is a giant step beyond traditional definitions of recovery; it is something many "normal" or "healthy" people have difficulty with.

These same techniques which empower former addicts toward states of wholeness and happiness can likewise work wonders for those outside of the recovery community who somehow feel empty and unfulfilled. People with chemical or process addictions and those whose addictions are less obvious can benefit equally from this process. For example, we all mix together things that should be clearly separated, such as adult needs and childhood needs, and separate as contradictory things that should remain connected, such as spirituality and sexuality. To reach deep enough within to be able to re-sort and redefine these concepts is the main milestone in Authentic Process Therapy.

My own evolution towards developing this approach has been a long, painful, and rewarding one, working through my own blocks, blind spots, and addictions, as well as those of hundreds of clients. I wasn't satisfied with mere self-control, and realized there was another step, and another, and yet another. Peeling back the layers of self-deceptions I went through many stages of recovery, as did my clients. Somewhere along the line, the paradigm shifts, and many of us end up in a place we don't expect to be. This new "place" seems to be a holistic state of being, rooted where we are in our lives, but being connected to a much greater whole; optimally capable of dealing with joy, bliss, serenity and creativity, as well as emotional traumas, loss, disease and injury. This text reflects that evolution.

As we journey toward complete recovery, the self expands to include our larger world and

universe. The healing of this new transpersonal self occurs when one nears completion of their own personal biographical healing, the point at which the blocks to perceiving that holistic connection with life finally dissolve, and our own healing merges with the transformation of the world around us. Complete recovery, then, involves the shame-free presentation of the self through community healing, the experience of personal wholeness, and finally the transpersonal breakthrough into what I call "holism."

Written with warmth, honesty, and compassion, *The Journey Toward Complete Recovery* charts a new path toward spiritual growth and renewal. Picking up where the Alcoholics Anonymous *Big Book* left off, Picucci addresses the personal struggle recovering people so often express: "I'm doing the best I can. Why do I feel so empty and limited? Why do I still feel a lack of purpose and meaning in life?"

The offering in this book is not solely for addicts, ex-addicts, or those who identify themselves as survivors of childhood trauma. It demonstrates a significant healing approach for every person seeking a richer life.

This book presents a bold new vision of psychotherapeutic healing. This type of therapy is called An Authentic Process Toward Complete Recovery or simply "Authentic Process Therapy." It has organically grown out of my personal experience, the experiences of my clients, the countless workshops I've conducted over the years, the wisdom of the maturing recovery movement, and insights from diverse cultural perspectives.

Authentic Process Therapy (APT) is a significant healing approach for all human beings who want to enrich their lives. It is not just for addicts, ex-addicts, and those who identify themselves as adult survivors of a traumatic childhood. While the research comes from the reclaiming of health, happiness, and fulfillment for the most broken of us, the application of these healing strategies is beneficial to every person seeking a richer life. Those who have experienced the depths of despair have used these healing techniques, emerging from their personal process with profoundly illuminating insights for all of us. APT is a multi-staged system for recovering your emotional, psychological, cultural, spiritual and sexual wholeness through community healing. The goal (also, the result, I trust) of your commitment to the process is complete recovery, or holism as described in Chapter One.

What makes Authentic Process Therapy bold, new and distinct from other modes of healing? That there are several important factors:

- * It was developed out of the experience of those being healed, rather than from an academic or medical perspective.
- * It incorporates from many disciplines and cultures that which has consistently demonstrated the ability to effect transformational change.
- * It incorporates the "community healing approach" used in addictions recovery (Twelve-Step, Therapeutic Communities, etc.) but shifts the focus to breaking down the barriers to feeling whole and complete experienced by all people.
- * It merges clinical, scientific, and psychotherapeutic discoveries and places them within the spiritual community context.
- * The healing process is clearly defined from the onset. This awareness of the "big picture" of one's journey brings comfort and grace to the healing. However, it allows unlimited flexibility

providing for individual adaptation.

* The personal "powers" and tools required for the journey are described in simple terms.

* The process is pragmatic because anyone who dedicates themselves to the journey will experience concrete results with each engagement.

The benefits of committing one's self to the process are glimpsed before the process has begun. The living map presented in this book invites you to move towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards personal power. It invites the reader to make good sense out of what has previously been an ambiguous process. For example, this book presents a list of universally "shared desires"- what most people really want from therapy - then provides tools and insights for fulfilling those desires, culminating in complete recovery.