

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**Relieve Me of the Bondage of Self:
Addiction Practitioners From Three Treatment
Centres in New Zealand Discuss the Use of
Community as a Method of Healing the Self.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Masters of
Philosophy in Social Anthropology at
Massey University, Albany, New Zealand.

Derek Ross Quigley

2013

Abstract

At the time of writing, there are as many as 6,000 people in New Zealand who are currently receiving a state benefit because of chemical dependency or addiction. A Ministry of Health survey (2009) estimated that there are 700,000 problem drinkers and that half of our population aged 16-64 have used drugs for recreational purposes in their lifetime. Many thousands of New Zealanders have reached a point of desperation and have sought assistance from a residential treatment centre in order to receive vital help for their addiction issues.

So how do these 'places of healing' turn someone from a state of self-pity, self-loathing, selfishness, and being in denial when they walk through the doors, to one of self-acceptance and self-awareness when they leave? I embarked on a study of three residential treatment centres, interviewing the agencies' practitioners, discussing how living in a separate community of alcoholics and addicts sets someone on a path to recovery, and how 'community' is used as a method to achieve 'relief from the bondage of self'. The study seeks to describe the addicted self and the relationship it has with community, and how community methods are used to understand and connect with the conscious self. Anthropological literature is used to describe concepts of 'self' and 'community', along with a mixture of psychological, sociological, and anthropological references to describe treatment methods.

I contribute my own 'insider' experiences as a former client of two residential addiction treatment centres to give a level of understanding of what similar addicts experience when they go through such a significant period of change in their lives. I am so grateful that there are addiction treatment facilities available free of charge to the public in New Zealand and I hope this work gives a voice of hope to the many who pass through their doors.

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been a long and incredibly rewarding journey, which would not have been possible without the help of many people and organisations. I firstly wish to thank the Higher Ground Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre, the Salvation Army Bridge Programme and the Odyssey House Trust, Auckland for agreeing to be a part of the study. I'm so very grateful to the participants who spared their valuable time and knowledge and allowed me to interview them; Johnny Dow, Kathy Mildon, Brett George, Clare Luamanuvae, Cynthia Young, Kerry Manthenga and those who wished to remain anonymous. Thank you to my peers, with whom I went through my own addiction treatment, and the case managers who helped me. I have thought of you often while writing this. To all my friends, I thank you for your kind encouragement and best wishes over the last few years.

Special thanks must go to my chief supervisor, Dr. Eleanor Rimoldi. I cannot thank you enough for your encouragement and belief in my ability to be able to complete this work. Thank you for your gentle guidance and enormous insight on all things anthropological. I'd also like to thank Associate Professor Kathryn Rountree for making your time and expertise available, especially when it came to last-minute-reviews. Thank you, Lyn and Kerrie Wales, for reminding me over the years that this would be something good for me to complete.

My thanks to my dear family and much-loved friends who have housed and cared for me during critical and sometimes challenging phases of my active addiction and early recovery. Harp Harding and Fraser Shaw in Wellington, my cousin Janette Boyle and her husband, David, in Belfast, my Aunty Maureen Weir in Auckland, my dear friend Margot Symes in Albany, my cousin Lisa Traill and her boys Callum, Connor and husband Dominic, and Fleur Tupe and Jennah Bodley in Auckland.

I have such an amazing, caring family who have been an invaluable support to me, especially in my burgeoning recovery. To my sister Robyn Shivan, I have so enjoyed getting to know you again after years of estrangement. To my sister Lynne Foster I thank you for your timely messages of love and reassurance and my sister Moira Quigley for your inspiration and kind, empathetic words from across the Tasman. And thanks for providing the really cool toys that helped prepare this thesis! To my brother Graeme Quigley, I thank you for sticking with me through thick and thin and for taking a risk and backing me when I needed it. My thanks to my extended family for their generosity of goodwill, Michael, Kurt, Peter, and Caitlyn Foster, John, Richard, Greg, Michael, and Brittany Shivan, Ana, Bob, and Lee Bennett and Alan Philps, Loretta Hannah and Amanda Harborne.

Thank you to my best friend, Paula Bennett, one of my biggest supporters in recovery. I'm so very grateful for your unconditional love and unwavering belief that I can be the best person I can be. A huge note of thanks must go to my sponsor Damien for seeing me through the troubling times and uncertainty of early recovery with your wisdom, humour and warmth. You have been one of my greatest teachers.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my parents, Judy and Alan Quigley, who never gave up hope when things looked grim for me in the final throes of my addiction. You've taught me the true value of family. Nobody wants to watch their children succumb to addiction and see the life slowly fade from their eyes, but you walked alongside me in my efforts at recovery, showing such courage, strength, unity, dignity and love. You continually inspire me and I'm so proud that you are my parents. This thesis is for you.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Chapter One: The Anthropology of Addiction	10
What's the Problem?	14
What is Addiction and Alcoholism?	18
What are the Treatment Modalities Available in New Zealand?.....	26
What is a Therapeutic Community?	29
What is Recovery?.....	32
Chapter Two: The Cathartic Observer Effect.	40
Chapter Three: A Brief History of Addiction Treatment	50
The New Zealand Experience.....	58
The Houses of Healing	63
Higher Ground.....	64
The Salvation Army Bridge Programme	66
Odyssey House	67
Chapter Four: The Addicted Self Upon Arrival.....	69
The Basket of Selves.....	80
Chapter Five: "I Can't. We Can." The Use of Community in the Treatment Setting.....	84
Community as Method	87
Encounter Groups	90
Structure and Rules.....	93
Community Reinforcement.....	95
Family Involvement.....	97
Spiritual Communities.....	100
Maori Spirituality	105
Length of Stay	107
Chapter Six: Words Into Action.....	110
Relapse	112
Why Treatment Communities Work.....	114
Opportunities for Further Research.....	117
Conclusion: There is Always Hope	120
Bibliography	124