

An Interview with Eve A. Wood, M.D.

- 1. There are hundreds of psychology/self-help books on the market. What makes your book, *There's Always Help; There's Always Hope*, different from all the rest?**

EAW: I wrote this book to provide hope and guidance to the millions of people trying to heal and getting stuck along the way. Our systems of care are broken. Our models don't work. Millions of people are suffering. Precious lives, that could be saved, are being lost every day to emotional and mental illness.

None of the other self-help books provide a comprehensive approach. None of them deal with a series of common medical diagnoses, address the role of biology, mind and spirit together, or provide countless examples of tales of challenge and triumph to bring the points home. All of them deal with a piece of the puzzle as if it's the whole story.

I became concerned about what was out there after hearing statements like these from my patients year after year: "I have read every self-help book there is, and I still don't know what's wrong with me or what I ought to do," and "I have been to so many doctors and therapists and I don't think I am much better. I don't have any idea what I need."

I didn't think it should be so complicated. My clinical work with patients has taught me something about how to empower those in need. If given enough information and guidance, each person can become the best steward of their own emotional health. Where there's a will, there's a way. I believe I have an obligation to share these lessons. So I wrote this self-empowerment book.

The book has won so many awards, including the Benjamin Franklin award for Best New Voice—Nonfiction (all categories) because it addresses a gaping need for hope, guidance and healing in our world. I feel blessed to be able to do my part to make a difference.

- 2. Help me understand what you mean when you say our system is broken. How does your book address this problem?**

EAW: Psychiatry is becoming more and more biological and pharmacological at a time when most people are looking for greater meaning and purpose in their lives and their care. Although surrounded by options for medical, psychological and spiritual support, we lack a unified model of healing that can guide us in our journeys to wellness. The book offers hope by joining all these elements together into a healing path that works.

3. Can you give me an example of how someone may be stuck in their effort to heal that your book addresses?

EAW: Many people are stuck in their attempts to heal as a result of lacking a necessary diagnosis, or carrying a wrong diagnosis. This book empowers individuals by showing them how to use their clinical histories to determine whether they might meet diagnostic criteria for one, several or no diagnoses. It also provides guidance on where to go for more information and assessment.

4. You mentioned that you include the spiritual dimension in your treatment approach. Are you talking about religion?

EAW: This book teaches readers who have faith how to use their beliefs to further their recovery and shows those of little faith how to develop a sense of meaning or purpose which can aid them in their attempts to heal. In modern psychiatry, the spiritual element is most often left out of the process. With real stories from my clinical practice, this book shows that nurturing or developing your spiritual side is a necessary component in healing.

5. Can you explain the analogy of the three-legged stool that you use to describe the relationship of body, mind and spirit?

EAW: I use the analogy of a three-legged stool to illustrate the concept of total well-being. Just as a three-legged stool requires each of its legs in order to stand, we each need to attend to our bodies, minds and spirits in order to heal. My book is a step-by-step guide showing the reader how to involve body (genetics, inborn characteristics and vulnerabilities), mind (background, beliefs, behaviors) and spirit (faith and the search for higher meaning) in a healing journey toward total wellness.

6. What are your credentials that make you the right person to write this book?

EAW: I am a psychiatrist and a graduate of Cornell University and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. I have served on the faculty of several medical schools and am now Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Arizona Program in Integrative Medicine.

I have devoted nearly two decades and over 28,000 hours to the care of troubled individuals from all walks of life. In combining body, mind and spirit approaches in my work, I have seen countless individuals--who were felt to need treatment forever--graduate from care. I see hope and possibility where many others don't. Perhaps this is why former U.S. Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop, wrote, "I have seldom been so moved by a book. This is the only healing model that makes sense" and "whether

you are a healthcare provider or fellow seeker, this book stands out like a lighthouse in stormy weather.”

I now teach at workshops and seminars all over the country. I am committed to building bridges between the disciplines and helping as many people as possible to heal. Every life matters to me, and I am doing what I can to make a difference.

7. Can you tell us what readers will gain from reading this book?

EAW: Readers will learn how to take charge of their emotional lives. This book combines traditional psychiatric medicine and universal spiritual principles in a step-wise guide to healing. It is full of hope, tips, tools and resources. Its lessons are taught through real and inspirational clinical case studies.

It offers readers:

- A road map for achieving emotional health and inner peace
- Detailed insight into the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of 13 common psychiatric illnesses
- Self-assessment tools and self-care techniques
- True patient stories that teach crucial life lessons
- Extensive appendices, resources and a comprehensive index.

This book offers a healing model that makes sense. Rabbi Lawrence Kushner says:

“You only get wisdom this good from your grandmother at the kitchen table. Dr. Wood offers us a road map for our own psycho-spiritual evolution.”

And Gregory Fricchione, MD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, says:

“This is a heartfelt book by a clinician of uncommon skill and empathy. It is a unique combination of deep caring born of the desire to relieve suffering and of practical advice. It expresses how care-giving in this age of modern medicine can still attend to the complete human being in all his glorious aspects.”