Discovering Who You Are Through Recovery

A Developmental Perspective on Intervention and Recovery

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The Challenging and Exciting Aspect of Your Work That This Keynote Address Will Cover

- Life is a journey with ordeals that activate our innate developmental potential.
- Development entails ordeals that disintegrate our current identity and drive us to reconstruct it at a higher level.
- Recovery is an intended aspect of life’s design that calls us to experience the adventure of discovering who we are.

Recovery Is Not About Getting Back to Normal But Moving Forward to One’s New Normal

Development is a Hero Journey and Recovery is an Important Part of It

- An adventure that moves from the known to the unknown.
- Ordeals and disequilibrium are necessary experiences.
- Overcoming and recovering are necessary experiences.
- Progressively experiencing discoveries of previously unknown aspects of one’s authentic self.
Intervening to Support the Ordeal of Recovery in Consumers’ Hero Journeys
(What I Learned From Roger’s Recovery)

- Find Me
- Don’t Leave Me
- Know Me
- Show Me
- Go With Me

Why Recovery is an Essential Part of Our Developmental Journeys
The recovery process is a deeply personal process that includes two key developmental tasks: 1) the reconstruction of a positive identity; and 2) the struggle for meaning. (David Pettie and Andrea M. Triolo, “Illness as Evolution: The Search for Identity and Meaning in the Recovery Process,” Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, American Psychological Association, Winter 1999, Vol. 22, No. 3)

Who You Are Came into the World Within You at Birth
- Ego discovers and connects with or realizes Self through its identity-making and meaning-making tasks.
- The Self is born.
- The ego is developed.
- Recovery entails ego’s efforts to (re)gain access to and connection with Self.
Recovery is Opportunity for Ego Development or Growth!
(Stackert and Bursik, “Ego Development and the Therapeutic Goal-Setting Capacities of Mentally Ill Adults,” American Journal of Psychotherapy, Vol. 60, No. 4, 2006)

- In a study of “mentally ill” adults, it was found that as ego development increased, symptomatology generally decreased on all but two symptom scales of the Symptom Checklist (SCL-90-R; Derogatis, Rickels, and Rock, 1976).
- Ego development can continue throughout adulthood when interpersonal and/or environmental circumstances demand accommodation (Bursik, 1991).
- However, ego development seems to taper off during early adulthood. Ego development levels appear to remain relatively stable throughout much of adulthood (Cohn, 1998).

A Self-Discovery Model of Recovery
Four Processes

(Re)Taking responsibility
Finding or making meaning
Reestablishment of a positive identity
Finding and maintaining hope

"The establishment of a fulfilling, meaningful life and positive sense of identity founded on hopefulness and self-determination."

"This definition describes recovery from the psychological trauma of the illness rather than a cure or the absence of symptoms."