



Drug-Impaired Professionals

Robert H. Coombs

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"I started out snorting a couple of lines a night and ended up injecting and snorting about three grams a day."--That could be your dentist talking.

"I worked a lot with hangovers and made lots of mistakes when coming down off acid."--That might be your nurse.

"The patient was waking up and I was out cold."--And that was some unlucky patient's anesthesiologist.

Professionals trusted with our well-being are the last people we suspect of drug addiction. And yet they are at least as likely as anyone else to abuse alcohol and other drugs--a well-kept secret finally aired and fully examined in this powerful book. Drawing on more than 120 personal interviews with addicted physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, attorneys, and airline pilots and those who treat them, Robert Coombs gives us a startling picture of drug abuse among "pedestal professionals." He discusses addiction as an occupational hazard for those with the easiest access to drugs, the greatest sense of immunity to their perils, and the most extensive means (and reasons) for hiding their problems. Throughout, the interviewees' eloquent and often harrowing testimony reminds us of the human drama behind the exhaustive research and analysis presented here. Their bittersweet stories bear out Coombs's contention that recovering addicts, free of their magical elixirs, can become more complete people than they were before addiction.

From the biological, psychosocial, and spiritual roots of addiction to the equally diverse approaches to recovery, to the merits and failures of government drug policy, *Drug-Impaired Professionals* offers a clear and complete overview of a complex problem that affects nearly every family in America.

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