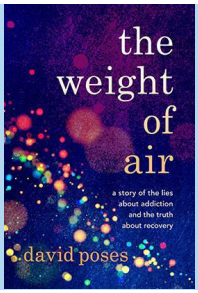
Discussion Guide



The Weight of Air
David Poses

Sandra Jones Publishing
2021
252 pages
ISBN: 978-1954861992

Substance Use Disorder

Summary

David Poses recounts his struggle to overcome mental illness and addiction. By age 19, he'd been through medical detox, inpatient rehab, 12-step programs and a halfway house. He saw his drug use as a symptom of depression, but experts insisted addiction itself was the problem. Over the next 13 years, he relapsed often, drowning in guilt, shame and secrets, until an evidence-based treatment not only saved his life but helped him thrive. With grit, humor and brutal honesty, David exposes the danger in traditional recovery models: they increase stigma and the risk of overdose, relapse, and death.

Questions

1. What did you think of David Poses writing style? The descriptions and dialogues?
2. Within the dialogue there are “nuggets of wisdom” embedded in the vivid descriptions of what was happening at the time. What was one of your favorite nuggets of wisdom from the book?
3. The author’s family and his home life while growing up is presented in bits and pieces throughout the book. How did this portrayal affect your understanding of the family’s dynamics surrounding David’s addiction?
4. David’s father refers to him as a “dope fiend.” In what ways does this language, and David’s father’s opinion of him, impact David’s recovery?
5. How does the author reconcile the “powerlessness of addiction” with the “responsibility of addiction?”
6. The book is a personal journey but also one of society’s journey to define and understand addiction. Explain your understanding of addiction after reading this book.
7. Do you agree with the author when he states, “addiction is a right?” Explain your answer.
8. The author discusses many myths relating to substance use. What myths have you heard? How does the language used in these myths perpetuate our misunderstanding of addiction?

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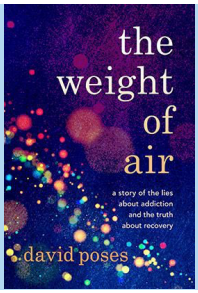

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9. The author believes drugs are a coping mechanism for individuals who have a compulsion to find relief from mental pain or previous trauma. He also notes that for most diseases, we have a treatment, yet when someone has an addiction, they are told "to just stop." Do you agree with the author's assertion that we cannot "cure addiction" until we treat its underlying cause? Explain your answer.

10. How does the book's title work in relation to the book's contents? If you could give the book a new title, what would it be?

11. Of all the information presented in the book, what has stayed you the most?

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