
Review Essays

Don't *Just* Say No

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William Ury. *The Power of a Positive No: How to Say No and Still Get to Yes.* New York: Bantam, 2007. 257 pages. \$25.00 (hardcover) ISBN: 139780553804980.

Practices and Theories

Bill Ury seasons his latest book with selected slogans from twelve-step programs such as Al-Anon (the group for those with relatives and friends with substance abuse problems), but he is perhaps too modest to share another: "Keep coming back, it works!" For those who say "no" to reading more of this essay, let me make clear: whatever its imperfections, *The Power of a Positive No* is one of those rare books that may actually make its readers happier. Perhaps Ury exaggerates a bit in the introduction when he writes, "Everything you care about — your happiness and the well-being of your family, your success in your job, and the health of the larger community — hinges on your ability to say No when it counts" (22). But he is certainly onto something when he later writes that "[i]n saying No positively, we are giving ourselves a gift. We are creating time and space for what we want. We are protecting what we value" (239).

Like twelve-step programs, and like Ury's most famous coauthored work, *Getting to Yes* (Fisher, Ury, and Patten 1991), *The Power of a Positive No* fuses together a variety of potentially independent ideas. To borrow yet another twelve-step saying, one might say "take what works and leave the rest." That includes both the explicit twelve-step references and what some might glimpse as more subtle twelve-step underpinnings.¹ Although Ury

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mentions problem-solving and other *Getting to Yes* methods, one could also ignore or reject those messages and still benefit from reading this book. One of the more subtle assumptions, shared by Al-Anon and many others, is that a central problem for many of us is that we, and others, would benefit if we said no more. On the other hand, it is quite possible that some of us say no too often, and perhaps even that our society says no too often, particularly to the needs of many with disadvantages. Ury acknowledges that we may sometimes ask whether we have the right to say no (72), but I find it persuasive that far too often those who have every right to say no, including survivors of family violence, are the ones who hesitate the most.

So, too, with those who help such survivors. Almost offhandedly, I mentioned writing this review at a recent gathering of clinical law professors, many of whom spend large portions of time saying yes to requests to lawyer for the disadvantaged and help their students do the same. At one point, I asked them if they had any interest in listening to me share some of the book's ideas about overcoming our difficulties in saying no. Every one of some twenty people raised their hand! Perhaps Ury's lessons on saying no will give license to further indifference by those who already do too little. For many others, like my clinical law professor friends, as well as many support groups, study groups, couples, families, and organizations, the book offers a language and framework to work and live better together.

The Power of a Positive No may not work for everyone all the time. Like twelve-step programs, it offers multiple slogans as well as an explicit theory of how people can change their behavior and become happier. Like any negotiation book or self-improvement program, Ury's reasoning rests on several explicit or implicit theories of change and, like *Getting to Yes*, it works at many different levels.

First, like *Getting to Yes*, the book seeks to shift the way we frame our experiences. The earlier book advocated that negotiators be neither hard nor soft but rather that they try to build creative options for satisfying many of the interests of all parties. Ury here suggests that readers neither attack nor accommodate. *Getting to Yes* offered four steps; in *The Power of a Positive No*, Ury describes a three-part positive no comprising "yes-no-yes?" steps. Second, as he and his coauthors did in *Getting to Yes*, Ury now adds several additional, concrete tools. Just as we might not brainstorm as well without following some of the suggested procedures that *Getting to Yes* popularized, so, too, Ury thinks we might fail to say no because we do not have ready phrases to express no clearly. Third and finally, some theories of change depend on uncovering and working through deep, often unconscious, processes. *Getting to Yes* ventured a bit in this direction with its list of familiar core needs, which Ury reproduces here (38). He also offers additional advice on dealing with emotions, which I discuss in much greater detail later.

Ury's three steps are deceptively simple. First, we say yes to something bigger, such as a relationship in general. Second, we say no to a particular request. Third, we ask if the questioner can say yes to our alternative. "It begins with an affirmation (*Yes*), proceeds to establish a limit (*No*), and ends with a proposal (*Yes*)" (102). Consider, for example, how I might have responded to a request to write a review of this book. First, the positive yes: "I'd love to work with you." Second, a clear no: "I don't think this book review is the way to do it right now." Third, an alternative: "How about if I review a different book next year?"

Of course, I did say yes, and have chosen to write my essay according to the three-step process that Ury recommends. Yes, this is an important topic, and I believe that many of the book's broad frameworks and smaller techniques help. But I also say no: some of Ury's ideas about handling emotion, culture, and power may be incomplete. Finally, yes again: *The Power of a Positive No* may be incomplete, but it nonetheless opens a dialogue about how we can choose our priorities, say no, enhance our relationships, and enrich our lives.

Yes: The Concept and Craft of Saying No

I remember reading *Getting to Yes* in law school. Like so many other negotiation students, I dutifully made lists of interests and options for gain, then tried them out in negotiation exercises and, perhaps a little too proudly, linked them in my class journal. It has been sixteen years now, so I think it is time to confess that initially I did not make the links quite as neatly as my journal suggested.

It was a little bit like the episode of the television show *Seinfeld* when George is insulted and cannot muster a "comeback" in real time. He seethes and thinks of a response long after the event is over. Although I did not seethe, I was often less than quick to craft creative options for mutual gain. A real shift came some time later — although I was not trying so hard, I began to see more options. I have had a similar experience with *The Power of a Positive No*.

At one juncture, I tried using the techniques prescribed in *The Power of a Positive No* quite deliberately, and it did not work. I've been training lawyers and negotiators in emotional recognition and lie detection for years, and I have needed to recruit some additional instructors as demand has grown. I called a former law school classmate to suggest he attend a future training. I mentioned I would not charge him for the training, and he would get the usual fee for any training he did for me in the future. He asked me instead to tutor him individually and offered to "help" with marketing. I adjusted my own schedule so we could meet.

One day before our meeting, he sent an email suggesting that I pay him a "reduced" rate of \$1,500 a month to "help." I was shocked! I thought I had made him a generous offer of free training, and I was being asked to pay

instead. I replied with a deliberate *positive no*. “I’m really looking forward to working together,” I emailed. (“Yes.”) I added, “I wasn’t expecting such an elaborate proposal from you.” (“No.”) Finally, I added, “I think there are lots of ways we could work together.” (“Yes?”).

My strategy did not work. We met the next day, and I thought we were both enthusiastic. The day after that I received an email suggesting I pay \$750 a month plus a sizable percentage of any future business he helped secure. His email also added, “I don’t want to haggle.”

“Haggle!” Is this a weakness of the positive no concept? Must a positive no sound a bit too much like haggling? Ury would suggest not. “Delivering a positive no is the crux of the process, requiring skill and tact” (103).

Did I do it incorrectly? I have reexamined Ury’s list of common phrasing problems for clues. I did not tell my friend what he should do (107), or use judgmental language (108), or make categorical statements (109).

Perhaps I should have been more like the Spanish banker whom Ury describes. When the banker must turn down a loan request from a valued client, he takes the client to a “fine meal and a good talk” at “the family hacienda an hour outside of Madrid” (132). Or perhaps, as I’ll suggest later in discussing “culture,” there was something more subtle going on.

A few weeks ago, a student casually walked into my office and began talking to me about my lie detection training. Before long, she asked if I could meet with her sister. Because I have been so busy — with any luck, I thought I would be caught up sometime in the middle of 2009 — I felt a subtle tightening in my toes and in my breathing. “I’m finishing this review essay and some other writing the next few weeks,” I heard myself saying. “Would early October work for her?” It did. And I realized her sister might help with some of my research. What a great opportunity! A few hours later, I reached for the book and found, “ ‘Not now’ is a very useful phrase . . . ” (136). I had even underlined it the first time I read it.

I found a number of Ury’s other specific suggestions quite helpful. Some of these, as in twelve-step programs, are single phrases:

“Slow down, we’re in a hurry” (175). (This is a paraphrase of one of my meditation favorites: “Don’t just do something, sit there” [Boorstein 1996].)

“ ‘Yes’ and ‘no’ are very important phrases, but another phrase that is really important sometimes is ‘wait a minute’ ” (32).

“The essence of a positive no is to *assert without rejecting* to assert your interests without rejecting the other as a person. You stand on *your* feet not on *their* toes” (104).

Why might these simple phrases work? Perhaps nothing more is at work here than skill building: we cannot say no until we learn how to do it.

And the phrases may also work at a deeper level, perhaps by reconnecting us with different parts of ourselves. Just as Pavlov's dogs would reconnect with the bell, these phrases may reconnect us with the parts of ourselves that already know how to take care of our own needs and defend our boundaries. Together the phrases tell us there is nothing wrong with us. Indeed, they tell us it is both normal to struggle with saying no at times, and it is manageable. Ury supports this idea by including a wide array of examples, from the no that intimates use with each other, that parents use with their children, and that Gandhi used with British imperialists. In one of his more remarkable no stories, he explains how one Russian submarine officer refused to launch a nuclear attack on the United States when another was starting one (116-117). (Fortunately, under that system, the missiles required the consent of two officers to launch.) In short, when we struggle with no, we have a lot of company.

I also found Ury's "Acceptance Speech Test" valuable (223). He explicitly recommends that a negotiator use this test when he negotiates with someone who must explain her decision to her constituents, such as a union leader who requires membership approval for a collective bargaining agreement. Ury recommends that one anticipate ways in which such agents could deliver the news to their principals. Of course, this test could apply to any negotiation. Even when one employee reaches an agreement with a manager, the employee may find himself having to explain the agreement, in his head or otherwise, to his family, his friends, and his coworkers, which can entail identifying the constituents, anticipating their likely criticisms, and developing ways to respond.

Although others may find it familiar, I recommend Ury's Plan B also. He explains Plan B simply as "your best course of action to address your interests *if* the other does not accept your no" (58). He also explains that "[i]n negotiation language, Plan B is called [your BATNA (best alternative to a negotiated agreement)]" (58). Some may find the discussion of Plan B to be a rehash of the BATNA discussion in *Getting to Yes*. I have always found BATNA to be a remarkably simple but powerful idea, but every year I teach it to my first-year law students, and every year a number stumble over it. I think those same students will find it easier to get their minds around Plan B, although it is largely the same concept.

No Simple Cultural Answers

The topic of differences — racial, gender, and otherwise — crops up periodically in *The Power of a Positive No*. At one point, Ury briefly describes a near auto accident that "took on racial overtones" (141). Elsewhere, he notes some "cultures, principally in East Asia . . . go to great lengths to devise No without actually using that word." Instead they deploy "indirect means." Ury explains how a Korean executive demurred on an American's request to increase the American stake in a Korean company.

“That is not impossible,” the Korean said (144). The American took this literally, but after weeks of negotiation, another Korean explained that the phrase “was just a polite way of saying, ‘Over my dead body’ ” (144).

“This,” Ury observes, “may lead to confusion for those not well versed in the semiotics of a different culture” (143). I found this advice a bit disappointing for several reasons. For one, it could support negative stereotypes of Asians as “inscrutable” or too shy. It made me think of a college friend of Asian background. A star at Harvard Law School, he went on to become a partner at a major national law firm. Along the way, lawyers at his firm discouraged him from litigation, suggesting he did not have the personality, reflecting perhaps how many Americans perceive Asians, but not taking into account that my friend had been an award-winning high school debater.

I found myself flipping back to the last edition of *Getting to Yes*. “The wide variations among cultures provide clues as to the kinds of differences for which you should be looking, but remember that all of us have special interests and qualities that do not fit any standard mold” (Fisher, Ury, and Patten 1991: 168). Such awareness has its place, and so do other tools. For instance, it may help us to understand groups who seem unlike us if we recognize that we share basic emotions with them. For some time now, we have known that certain emotions show up in common facial patterns across different cultures (Ekman 2003). I think again of what I could have missed when speaking to the friend who replied to my offer to train him with his request to charge me for consulting. He said he did not like to haggle. Could this be an identity issue for him? Perhaps he does not think that a professional should “haggle” but simply be paid a set rate. Or — did I forget to mention this? — because he is African-American, perhaps he is particularly wary of haggling. After all, relatively recent research suggests comparatively few African-Americans believe anyone can successfully bargain over the price of a car (Ayes 2001). Perhaps he felt I was trying to haggle with him because he is African-American.

This could be an understandable fear given the research that shows the disadvantages that African-Americans and others have faced in negotiation. Research shows that the prices that automobile dealers offer African-Americans are higher than the initial prices that they offer to white people, even when the prospective buyers negotiate with the same dealers using the same techniques (Ayes 2001).

Earlier research suggests that women, as well as African-Americans, may face distinct problems in saying no. A white man who says no may be experienced in our culture as “assertive,” while a woman may be perceived as “bitchy,” or an African-American as “uppity” (Kanter 1977). All this means that the ability to say no may not simply reflect a failure to develop one’s Plan B, to remember catch phrases, to manage one’s emotions, or to adopt any of Ury’s other suggestions Ury offers. Instead, some people may face

distinct disadvantages in being able to say no. Nor is this simply a question of “power” in the sense of “alternatives” in any given situation; if it were, then developing a Plan B would go far. Instead, those of us who fit too neatly into disabling stereotypes face distinct burdens.

Emotion: Yes and Not Quite

For me and many of my classmates, law school was an emotional time. Texts revealed little about emotion (except perhaps the doctrine that intense emotion might reduce the punishment for murder in the “heat of passion”). *Getting to Yes* aspired us to go further by offering advice on how we could deal with emotion more skillfully.

A persistent criticism of *Getting to Yes* has been that it treated the role of anger in negotiation insufficiently. The book seems to support the idea that venting in negotiation can be useful. “People,” it posited, “obtain psychological release through the simple process of recounting their grievances” (Fisher, Ury, and Patten 1991: 31). But it also cautioned that “[r]eleasing emotions can prove risky if it leads to an emotional reaction” (Fisher, Ury, and Patten 1991: 31). In practice, many in my experience still read it as license to vent.

The Power of a Positive No more clearly rejects venting. “Psychologists have found,” Ury writes, “that venting at the other can be a counterproductive method for cooling down. Far from decreasing one’s level of anger, angry outbursts usually increase it and, in fact, prolong an angry mood” (111).

The book also compares the reactions that a no can generate to the reactions of people in mourning. When we tell someone no, Ury writes, they may experience avoidance, denial, anxiety, anger, bargaining, sadness, and acceptance — the same responses that Elisabeth Kubler-Ross noted are experienced by people confronting the death of a loved one. But unlike many who reify this process, Ury recognizes that “[t]here is no lockstep order, and the pattern will of course vary from person to person” (171).

Unfortunately, the book is less persuasive in dealing with other emotions, including some other aspects of anger. Ury cites Carol Tavris’s important 1982 book on anger (Tavris 1982). But since then, thanks to the research of Keith Allred and others, we now know more specifically that anger may lead negotiators to misinterpret what others want, which can diminish their results (Allred et al. 1997). Ury’s problem here is not just that he failed to note the more recent work but that he misses the opportunity to attract the interest of those negotiators with a focus on the bottom line. (On other aspects of emotion and negotiation, see, e.g., Freshman, Hayes, and Feldman 2002; Thompson 2004; Fisher and Shapiro 2005).

So, too, Ury may encourage unrealistic expectations of how easily negotiators may vanquish anger. “With anger, our heart rate and blood pressure usually increase, causing the blood to flow more rapidly from our

brain to our extremities for purposes of fight or flight. This is not the best time to make decisions. By pausing, if only for a few seconds, and taking a few slow, deep breaths, we can begin to slow down our hear rate and relax our tensed muscles” (175). A few seconds!?! What happened to the compassion for the way the reactions of others “will of course vary from person to person”? (171). This might have been a better time to offer a more comprehensive array of techniques.

The Power of a Positive No may also encourage false expectations about our abilities to work through emotions to deeper truths. Consider first Ury’s description of how one mother worked through her fear of saying no to her daughter’s requests to stay home from school. “With her friend’s help, she was able to trace back her own need for love and belonging. She came to realize that her anxiety around sending her child to school came from her own childhood feelings of abandonment by her mother. Since school was not a form of abandonment, she was able to relax and let go of the anxiety she was feeling. The next day, she simply said No to her daughter’s insistence on staying home. . . . To her surprise, there was no resistance and no scene” (34). My surprise, too! I do not know if it is more surprising that one could uncover some core vulnerability with the help of a friend or that one’s child would accept such a change with “no resistance and no scene.”

Compare Ury’s skepticism regarding the mother’s emotional reactions with his embrace of “gut feelings.” “I have learned to listen to my gut feelings when I am faced with an important decision, such as whether to accept a major work engagement. I have found that those gut feelings are almost inevitably correct, pointing to needs that I haven’t properly addressed. If I get a queasy feeling about accepting a new project, for example, it usually means I am overlooking my need for more family or personal time” (39).

Both these extremes of rejecting emotional reactions and embracing one’s “gut” miss something. There is no problem with Ury’s recognition of the emotions that underlie our difficulties in saying no. Rather the process of uncovering “truth” and skillful insights that Ury describes seems inadequate. A colleague and I both find ourselves confronting situations in which we have had difficulties saying no to requests. Both of us have gained insights through working with a process developed by Robert Kegan (Kegan and Lahey 2001).

Kegan argues that we often do not make useful changes, such as saying no to requests, because we have some other competing commitment or commitments. In my colleague’s case, he discovered that his competing commitment to saying no was his sense that people might not do their work or solve their problems without his help. In my case, I discovered that the competing commitment came from the enjoyment I feel when I am in the company of other people. I find it particularly hard, therefore, to turn down both professional and social invitations. As Kegan recommends, my

colleague and I both found it took time to work through this. He had to test his fear that the world would not get by without him, and I tested out my fear that I could not be alone and happy.

Two additional processes can help people uncover the emotional aspects of their trouble saying no. The first comes from cognitive therapy. We first recognize that we are having a kind of thought, such as “This is like my mother abandoning me,” or “If I don’t say yes, who knows if I’ll have nothing to do and just end up feeling lonely and sad” (see, e.g., Beck 1999). Cognitive therapy neither rejects such thoughts as “emotional” nor treats them as “gut” truth. Rather, cognitive therapy suggests that we first question whether the thought might reflect some kind of common cognitive distortion such as “shoulds” (108) or “categorical statements” (109).²

Second, cognitive therapy lets us consider our “feelings” and “gut instincts” by weighing them against the evidence. My colleague can try an experiment for one hour: what happens if he closes the door, turns off the email chime, and ignores the phone? He may find that people wait for him, that he gets more work done, and he feels refreshed. I can try a similar experiment: if I turn down a request, do I find later that I am lonely and sad, or am I able to make other plans?

Mindfulness offers another, complementary tool. When we have a thought or feel an emotion, we recognize it as a thought or emotion. We may even say to ourselves, “Thoughts are not facts” (see Segal, Williams, and Teasdale 2002). Tara Goleman, who collaborates with her husband Daniel Goleman, the author of *Emotional Intelligence*, combines this with awareness of common cognitive distortions (Goleman 2001). Someone such as myself, for example, may name a feeling as “abandonment schema.” Sometimes, simply naming and acknowledging a process can help us manage our emotional reaction. (How well it succeeds depends on how early we catch the reaction and our own emotional profile, i.e., how quickly our emotion goes from neutral to its peak and back again to neutral.)

For me, this process of naming works somewhat more effectively than does Ury’s suggestion that one “go to the balcony,” a metaphor that Ury first introduced in an earlier book, *Getting Past No* (Ury 1991). “The balcony,” he explains in the newer book, “is a detached state of mind you can access anytime you choose” (30). The balcony lets you “[i]magine yourself for a moment as an actor on a stage about to speak your lines” (30).

Ury’s suggestion that we “name” the “game” when we think someone else’s behavior is a tactic, such as “personal insult” or “misrepresentation” may be similar, but I do not think it is quite the same. It may offer a better alternative than reacting thoughtlessly to behavior that we might find unpleasant. Naming the game assigns a label, but stops there. It does not consider the evidence to see if the behavior might fit some other pattern nor consider the evidence supporting such a label.

Cognitive therapy techniques and mindfulness tools may take longer than the nearly instant insights that Ury describes. Ury's description of how quickly people gain insight does not fit my own experience so much, but it may very well fit the experience of others. So, too, it may be something that any given individual may find more or less useful in different areas of his life or at different stages of his life.

I wonder, for example, what kinds of specific processes Ury found helpful in his own divorce. He writes that he and his wife took "great care to say Yes to our future friendship" (226). To make good on that intention, they "agreed on a set of process principles" (226). This meant they "stayed in close personal touch, looking for practical ways to assist and support each other in making the transition, whether it was in setting up a new home or in grieving the loss of a parent" (227). He confides "it was not always easy" (227). This sounds a bit more familiar, but it is hard to tell without more information. It would have been nice to hear more details about that experience.³

I have one final point to make regarding Ury's treatment of emotion. He writes that "[w]hat causes us to react are our negative emotions" (33). Yes, as we have seen, *and* positive emotions play a role as well. Roger Fisher and Dan Shapiro cover this ground well in *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate* (Fisher and Shapiro 2005). Some emotions may be *helpful*, and we want to cultivate them more. Here, too, an entire constellation of research shows that the presence of positive emotions leads to better outcomes, not just in negotiation but in almost any task that involves more than rote skills (Freshman, Hayes, and Feldman 2002). To be fair, some of this is implicit in *The Power of a Positive No*, such as its advice to deliver bad news to a client in a pleasant setting.

The Practice of Saying No

None of my questions detract from my confidence that *The Power of a Positive No* is an important and useful book. Rather, I wonder most about what answers each of us will find when those of us who do not commonly say no begin doing it more often.

It is not easy to know what will work for any of us in a given situation. *The Power of a Positive No* is an optimistic book. At times, it makes the process of saying no seem too easy to me. This led me to wonder about rival, more complicated hypotheses. Will the yes-no-yes paradigm really work as easily as Ury seems to imply? Or do we need to go through a more complicated process to uncover deeper individual psychological truths, or social realities for less powerful groups in our society?

I offer these alternative hypotheses as questions: what do each of us need to say no when appropriate? In his final chapter, Ury invites exactly this kind of personal examination: "Begin by paying closer attention to how

you say No. . . . Observe your unhealthy Yeses and your unhealthy Nos. Reflect on what works and what doesn't. Then try again" (237).

It is a common tendency to love complex answers. Years ago, in a seminar on theories of power, we read about three accounts of power, culminating in a "deeper, richer" theory — who would not want that? And yet psychology research teaches that the deeper, richer understandings may not always lead to change.

Let's reconsider the story of depression treatment. At one point, Freudian analysts attempted to treat depression by examining through psychoanalysis the experiences and perceptions that may have caused the depression. Many now doubt the effectiveness of such therapy (e.g., Ekman 2003). Today many find that relatively brief cognitive-behavioral therapy works better (e.g., Beck 1999). We can learn relatively quickly that our thoughts may be distortions without having to trace them back to their origins in our childhoods or wherever they come from. So, too, others may find that medication works quickly to alleviate depression. Still others may find, as I have in my own life, that mindfulness practice empowers positive emotions and disables negative ones (Freshman, Hayes, and Feldman 2002).

That brings me back to my suspicion that *The Power of a Positive No* may lead to real healing and wellness. Often, as Martin Seligman has shown, depression stems from a sense of our own helplessness (Peterson, Maier, and Seligman 1995). It seems plausible that such helplessness may arise from the sense that we simply cannot say no. By showing us that we can, and by normalizing the sense of how difficult that can be, *The Power of a Positive No* has real healing potential. And who would want to say no to that?

NOTES

1. My own brother struggled with drug addiction for thirty-six years until his death a few years ago, and I have my own ambivalent feelings toward the twelve steps he worked on and off for so long. It is hardest for me to know even now whether I said no to his requests too little or too often. I do know many who have found those slogans comforting and, they might say, empowering. I wondered more than once whether this book would be received better if it used the twelve-step slogans less but more often illustrated principles of skillfully saying no. It reminded me of the dilemma those of us who write about mindfulness face: do we mention Buddhist stories and principles explicitly or do we find Western analogs, as Jon Kabat Zinn did so skillfully in *Wherever You Go, There You Are* (Kabat-Zinn 1994). One can also spot some helpful influences from Buddhist practices here including the idea that one can transform negative emotions (47) and, perhaps, the use of slogans. Both Tibetan Buddhists and twelve-step programs make frequent and skillful use of slogans, though not the same ones.

2. So, too, some frameworks particular to negotiation may help as well. Dan Shapiro and Roger Fisher identified some of those in their outstanding book, *Beyond Reason* (Fisher and Shapiro 2005). Here, one partner may be upset when the other mentions "we are having dinner with the Joneses." Perhaps one likes the Joneses, and the other would sooner keep up with someone else. Or, Fisher and Shapiro teach, the underlying emotional dynamic may be autonomy, and the partners may develop more useful emotions by consulting with each other more often.

3. So, too, it might have included more explicitly the engagement he himself had with twelve-step programs. This might normalize the path of those of us who turn to such programs. Of

course, as I am writing this, I am mindful that when I mentioned my own brother's addiction earlier, I did not mention that I, too, had gone to Al-Anon meetings for relatives and friends of those with addictions.

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