

What Has Dr. Shook Been Reading?
The Natural Mind, By Andrew Weil, M.D.
Houghton Mifflin publisher

I consider myself relatively well read and educated, but this book was hard to read. Its pages steeped in academia, I found myself continually turning back the page seeking a path through this most verbose and convoluted text. Keep a standard and a medical dictionary on hand. This is a book used as a text for college courses on Drugs and Drug Policy and does not claim to offer a simple explanation for a complicated topic.

The Natural Mind was first published in 1972 and revised in 1986, this book is liberally spiced with the ambiance of the “radical ‘60’s”. “The Establishment” vs. “The Hippies”. It is a book about DRUGS ... Mind altering drugs and the human drive to achieve an altered state of consciousness. Alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, LSD.

Oh Goodness Gracious, My Daddy would never have allowed me to read this book.

Dr. Weil argues that “‘Highs’ (or altered states of consciousness) originate within the human nervous system and are elicited or triggered by drugs” He goes on to discuss how these same states of altered consciousness can be achieved without turning to chemicals. Dr. Weil refers to Yoga, Meditation, prayer and breathing exercises as just a few of the truly natural and personal methods of achieving altered states of consciousness.

In this I do agree, for these techniques have been used for thousands of years in the non-western world. Practitioners of these techniques seem to positively glow with Love Peace and Happiness. Western Medicine also utilizes techniques in biofeedback, teaching individuals deliberate and mindful control over body functions such as blood pressure and heart rate. Hypnosis to can be, in some people, effective in reducing pain, retrieving lost memories and accelerating healing.

Dr. Weil’s suggested remedy for the current drug problem is to teach recreational drug users (be it alcohol, marijuana, nicotine or LSD) drug free methods of achieving their “high”. When I selected this book to review I had hoped Dr. Weil would place a greater emphasis on these Non Drug techniques. Offering meditation and exercise, as an alternative to recreational drugs would, no doubt, make this text a bit more Daddy Friendly.

Oh Dear the Flesch-Kincaid level of this document is skyrocketing I’d best stop now.

This book wore me out ... next I’ll be reading, Change Your Life Without Getting Out of Bed (The Ultimate Nap Book) By SARK

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