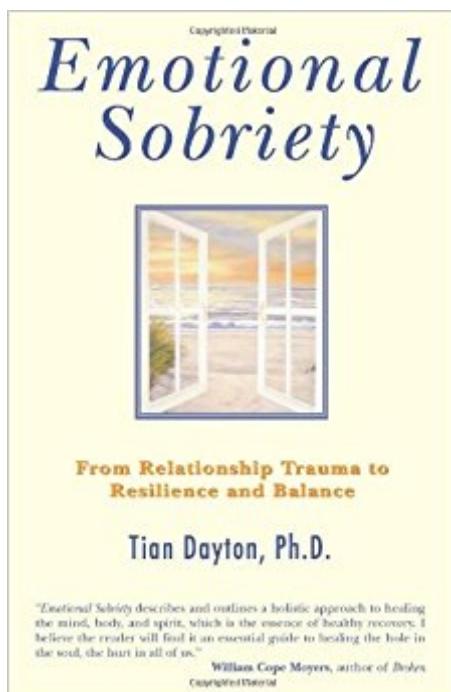


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# Emotional Sobriety: From Relationship Trauma To Resilience And Balance



## Synopsis

Do you use substances or engage in compulsive activities to regulate your mood? Do you reach for something sweet, a couple of drinks, or a pack of cigarettes after a difficult day because you can't unwind without them? Do you race to the stores to spend away the day's frustrations or run around in circles taking more time to get less done? If these self-defeating habits sound familiar, Emotional Sobriety will shed light on why and how these coping mechanisms threaten your health and impact resilience. When we manage the stresses of the day by turning to outside 'mood managers' such as food, sex, work, shopping, gambling, drugs, and alcohol rather than healthier forms of 'self-soothing,' it is because we lack emotional sobriety--the state of processing our thoughts efficiently to bring our emotions into balance, says bestselling author and renowned addictions psychologist Tian Dayton, Ph.D. In her latest book, Emotional Sobriety, Dr. Dayton shares compelling, honest tales of her life experiences and case studies of those she has counseled. Illustrating that emotional sobriety is a mind/body phenomenon, Dr. Dayton includes ideas on how to attain emotional literacy--the skill of translating feelings into words so that we can use our thought processes to understand and bring our emotions into balance--and how to calm the limbic system so that we can actually experience what we're feeling. The limbic system processes our emotions and governs our mood, appetite, and sleep cycles. Repeated painful experiences, in childhood or adulthood, over which we have no ability or sense of control or escape can oversensitize us to stress and deregulate our limbic system. Dr. Dayton shows you through concrete examples how to bring your emotions and thoughts into balance and learn healthy ways of 'self-soothing' to relieve symptoms of depression, anxiety, rage, and the desire to self-medicate.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

'A holistic approach to healing the mind, body, and spirit--which is the essence of healthy recovery. . . . An essential guide to healing the hole in the soul, the hurt in all of us.'--William Cope Moyers, Author of *Broken*

Tian Dayton, Ph.D., has a doctorate in clinical psychology and is Director of Program Development and Staff Training for the Caron Foundation in New York City. Dr. Dayton is a nationally renowned speaker and workshop facilitator and the author of fifteen books on self-help and psychological issues. She is a frequent guest expert on MSNBC, CNN, NBC, Montel, John Walsh, Rikki Lake, Geraldo, and others.

I am a Ph.D. candidate of Marriage & Family Therapy and work as a Marriage and Family Therapist Intern. I have run psychotherapy groups for several years already with addicts and their families, and I've been trained in multiple therapy modalities (EFT, SFBT, Gestalt, CBT, MI). This is a book that I wish I had written. Even though I posted this review nine months ago, I continue to recommend this book to both my colleagues and friends. I still have not found any books as comprehensive and balanced, as this book offers the latest research and integrates a spectrum of our field's freshest relationship theories into one book. She helps us move closer toward a "Grand Unified Theory" of therapy and integrates attachment theory, attachment injuries, updates in the codependency literature, research on emotions, PTSD, ADHD, grief, depression, anxiety, and more, and she makes it applicable to the lay person as well as to the therapist. This book can help clients understand how therapists can help, while giving therapists an updated look at how research on attachment theory can be integrated with the fields of substance abuse. For example, a lot of people still treat substance abuse using old models, using cognitive-only approaches, outdated notions of codependency, and overlooking the role of the brain, emotions, biology, trauma and the family system. She validates the newer approaches of using more experiential, emotionally-focused and systemic approaches with addicts and families and gives us clear language to explain why it works. Dr. Dayton stops us before we "throw the baby out with the bathwater." The pop psychology concept of "codependency" was popular in the addiction recovery field, but it was criticized mainly because there is little or no scientific evidence to support basic tenets of codependency theory, it

became so watered down that it was useless, it seemed that every behavior was codependent, and was generally used as a derogatory label that tended to apply more often to women. Thus, Dr. Dayton prefers to talk about "relationship trauma." Nevertheless, Dr. Dayton provides her own definition of codependency, but links it to the latest research on adult attachment. You may also be interested in some recent research on codependency & attachment styles I came across by Whiteleather & Doumas (2004). [...] Using the four quadrant model of attachment styles, they correlated the concept of "codependency" with the anxious/preoccupied attachment style. Dr. Dayton defines codependency using an integration of attachment theory and Bowen family systems theory which I agree with and couldn't have said better: "Codependency, I feel, is fear-based and is a predictable set of qualities and behaviors that grow out of feeling anxious and therefore hypervigilant in our intimate relationships. It is also reflective of an incomplete process of individuation....Though codependency seems to be about caretaking or being overly attuned to the other person, it is really about trying to fend off our own anxiety." (p. 150-151) I believe that both codependency AND counterdependency are maladaptive behaviors used to manage anxiety about relationships--both are terms that I'm seeing appear more often recently. Dr. Dayton believes that these anxious or avoidant behaviors are the result of attachment injuries, or relationship traumas as she calls it. She EVEN shows how humor and psychodrama are healing, both of which I believe are powerful therapeutic agents. She describes the theories of humor and how laughter is healing, when I thought I was the only therapist who was interested in that. Yeesh! She got (almost) everything that I feel is important, including spirituality. If I was to write the next reincarnation of her book, I would want to include more Christian spirituality, but that's only because my undergraduate degree is in theology. My ONLY minor criticism was when she connected the Greek concept of "agape" love with romantic love (page 122) and said that it was too "unstable" for the foundation of a family. I don't believe Dr. Dayton truly understands what agape love means. Agape is by definition an unconditional decision to love somebody despite feelings, and therefore is the MOST stable form of love, something we need more of in our relationships. In the Bible, "agape" is used to describe God's unconditional, unmoving love for us despite the things we do wrong. The only other concern, which is not a bad thing, is that perhaps Dr. Dayton tries to do too much in her book! Whole books have been written on the topics for each chapter, so that she can't dive in too deep on any of them. Her book is monumental in putting all of this into one book. But, at least I can highly recommend this book as a good integration of a broad spectrum of theories for the professional who works with relationship traumas and helping people become more emotionally aware, as well as an advanced overview for the general audience.

This is an incredibly informative and transformative book. Unfortunately, the author gets off to a bad start in the first few chapters as she immediately delves into the neurophysiology of relational trauma, important but not the first topic I'd use to start. I was greatly rewarded for my persistence though as her message is fresh, succinct, and tremendously enlightening to anyone who has lived through dysfunctional family systems, alcoholic or otherwise. Her chapter on resilience was worth the price of the book alone. Highly recommended.

Excellent information on what drives all compulsive/addictive behavior and how anyone can learn to manage their feelings in healthy ways. I'm a therapist, but I think the book is written in a way that is easy for any teen or adult to learn from.

I learned so much, I will read this again and again. I'm pumped to learn more and grow more emotionality sober. Eye opening

Very detailed, highly organized and comprehensive look at the emotional issues that affect personal and professional relationships. Applicable to all people - not related to alcoholism. More focus on family of origin issues and models which affected early emotional development.

I have been in Recovery for 8 years, sober for 6, and I first gave this book to my sponsee for her own sobriety anniversary, but after leafing through, I realized it was essential reading for me too, or anyone in recovery. So often people like myself encounter folks who put down the drink or the drug long ago, but for one reason or another, they have not been able to mature emotionally; they remain the age they were when they began to use their substance of choice. In AA this is known as a "dry drunk" and it is an unhappy state of being, to say the least. This book stands alone, or as a wonderful adjunct to a Recovery program. It can be daunting to realize so much more has to be done after we get sober. "Emotional Sobriety" addresses this mental state beautifully and provides tools for a remedy as well.

I think this book is a must read for anyone considering having children--just for the information on how the "wiring" of your brain develops. For me, it has helped unravel several mysteries in my life. I highly recommend.

Tian Dayton does it again. This therapist has helped me such a great deal over the years, and now I'm learning what happened to me, specifically to my brain, to cause the PTSD that I have. I haven't finished it and haven't gotten to the solutions part, but I know from Tian's previous works that she'll provide healthy and helpful things for me to do to heal and be healthier.

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