

As fragmented as I was, first impressions of DEC were the humaneness of their approach, a keen perception of the broad and particular issues that plague a recovering addict, their compassion, fairness and firmness.

Not that it was a picnic; my initial withdrawal and the broken legacy I had engineered saw to that. However, acceptance, empathy, fixed parameters combined with some personal space, and guidance from the staff, slowly bought me back from whatever dismal world I had created to the point that reality, at least the immediate world, started to have some savour again.

What struck me as well that DEC was a place where your ideas could be expressed freely; whether in personal talk with the staff or in daily house-group meetings, hashing out relationships with other recovering addicts. Of course, if you spouted nonsense someone would sit on your head; the point was that there was a climate of tolerance and reason, not a dogmatic, indoctrinating and enforced mind-set.

Being compelled by personal reasons to stay on for far longer than a normal programme, I found no reason, later, to alter any of my impressions of DEC; thus the compliment that they are consistent is utterly sound. Which latter reason, I guess, is a most compelling argument in favour of the ministry; addicts have no chance of recovery in an atmosphere that is oriented towards performance/reward at any cost, a program where the parameters shift in a fickle fashion and staff 'moods' determine the outcome of daily problems.

I hope I'll never enter a rehab again...but, if I must, I'll know where to go...and it's not negotiable.