

**Shrink Rap Radio #331, December 20, 2012**

**“A Jungian Approach to Addiction.”**

**Dr. David Van Nuys Ph.D., aka ‘Dr. Dave’ interviews Dr. David Schoen Ph.D.  
(Transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio by Gloria Oelman)**

**Introduction:**

My guest today is Jungian analyst and author David Schoen and we'll be discussing his work in addictions counseling as well as his book on the connection between Jung and Alcoholics Anonymous. Jungian analyst David Schoen has over 30 years experience as an addictions counselor. He's also a senior analyst in the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts and the cofounder of the Jung Society of Baton Rouge. He's a lecturer, writer of several internationally published books and a Louisiana poet. His books include *Divine Tempest: The Hurricane as a Psychic Phenomenon* and his most recent *The War of the Gods in Addiction: C. G. Jung, Alcoholics Anonymous and Archetypal Evil*. Now here's the interview.

**Dr. Dave:** David Schoen welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

**David Schoen:** Thank you.

**Dr. Dave:** Well it's a pleasure to meet you and have you on the show and I believe you're in Louisiana. Do I have that right?

**David Schoen:** That's right, I sure am.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, I interviewed another Louisiana Jungian that you might know. Does the name Richard Chachere ring a bell?

**David Schoen:** Yeah, Richards in my field (?), uh, huh.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, I interviewed him about the tragedy of the BP oil spill in the Gulf which he was very concerned about at the time that we spoke – it was not too long after that. And I see things on TV that are ads, basically, by BP saying ‘Oh, we've cleaned up the gulf, the fish are there and people are swimming’ and so on. I'm just curious that you're there – what's your take on the situation as it stands now?

**David Schoen:** Well, it seems... they do seem to have cleaned up most of what they have spilled. I think the question is the long term damage to the fish and the shellfish in the gulf in terms of the – what effects the oil will have on the future crops of those things and right now it looks like... it looks O.K., but in the recent storm down here the water and waves kicked up the sand and it unearthed more of the tar balls that were from the storms.

**Dr. Dave:** I'm sorry to hear that.

**David Schoen:** So the final's still out on all that but there has been improvement. I eat seafood all the time and I wouldn't if I thought it was dangerous.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah.

**David Schoen:** And it is pretty good, at least stuff that we're getting.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K. That's good news. Now, you're both a Jungian analyst and you've also been an addictions counselor with a background in social work. Which came first, your involvement in addictions counseling or becoming a Jungian analyst?

**David Schoen:** I was a clinical social worker first and then the addictions counseling and then I got my certification as a Jungian analyst.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, tell us the story of how you came to be a Jungian analyst. Generally everybody's got kind of an interesting pathway about, sort of, you know – how did you get the call?

**David Schoen:** Well, I was in graduate school and my supervisor Elaine Molchanov was in training to be an analyst and I didn't know anything about Jungian psychology – this was back in the seventies – but for some reason, I started recording all the dreams from my past that I could remember and then I brought them to Elaine and we started working on the dreams and I realized at that point that I wanted to be a Jungian analyst but it was a long time until I could be in the position to be able to do that. Pretty much what I had done was – I'd gone through all the normal theories of schools – Gestalt, and rational emotive and all that kind of stuff and family systems and all – and they're all good, they all had value but when I hit Jungian psychology it was like 'I'm never gonna get to the end of this, you know.'

**Dr. Dave:** Right (laughter).

**David Schoen:** What I realized, so it was sort of like I was in the deep water that I wanted to be in and I could be in pretty much for ever, you know.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**David Schoen:** So that's kind of my story in terms of the Jungian analyst thing and I had to go to Texas, to Texas region or seminar, through the Inter-Regional Society – they didn't have one in Louisiana at the time and I had to go there to get my training so I got a lot of frequent flyer coupons with South West Airlines and then eventually when I became an analyst, I was one of the founding members of the New Orleans Jungian Seminar, which trains people to be Jungian analysts, too.

**Dr. Dave:** Ah ha, O.K. Yeah, I didn't know about that group. And how is it you came to be interested in the field of addictions?

**David Schoen:** Well, that's an interesting story. Kind of the last thing that I wanted to do was work in addictions. I basically was trying to get out of the State hospital system and I was looking at a bunch of different places and then I got a fortune cookie that said "Opportunity lies not where it should be but where it is" which got me... I got this fortune cookie and I started thinking differently, you know, like 'O.K. well where is opportunity that I've been excluding?' So right down the road was an

addictions chemical dependency unit and I had never really been interested in that and I thought 'well, maybe I ought to look at that, I ought to consider that, it's not where my opportunity should be but maybe it is.' So I went over there and I interviewed and they had a great treatment program with lots of group and individual therapy and very, very innovative psychodrama and all kinds of things so I learned basically a lot about directly, addictions, from that but I also had a natural interest in addictions because three of my brothers are recovering alcoholics and my mother-in-law is and my deceased step mother-in-law was an alcoholic too. And they all recovered through AA and twelve steps and so I was very grateful to the twelve steps for basically saving their lives, because they were all going down the tubes in one way or another and regular counseling and everything else wasn't really helpful. So that got me curious and thinking about what is it about AA that seems to be effective in terms of addiction and alcoholism that other stuff isn't. So that got me going on my quest in terms of writing the book – what's the phenomena, you know?

**Dr. Dave:** Now let me just back you up a little bit. Did you get into the addiction work before or after you became a Jungian analyst?

**David Schoen:** I got into the addiction work before. I was in... I had to be in a position to have the money and the time, so I had to have my private practice established, so I did the addiction stuff and then transitioned into private practice and then when I did that I was able to start my analysis. So it was a long road, it was probably ten years after I knew I wanted to be an analyst, before I had an opportunity.

**Dr. Dave:** Sure. I'm not surprised to hear that, I know it is a long road. Now you mentioned your book and we're going to be talking about that quite a bit. You titled your book *The War of the Gods in Addiction*. What are you getting at with that idea of the war of the gods?

**David Schoen:** Well, what I'm getting at is that there's an archetypal level to addiction that's pretty much not been looked at before. It's been viewed in terms of ego and dynamics and impulse control and obsessive compulsive – that kind of thing – but what I'm positing is that there's an element in every true addiction that has the ability to kill you, O.K.? And that it's impersonal – and the counter to that, of the neutralizing factor to that, seems to be like the higher power in AA. Now whether you believe in the higher power or not, basically that there are forces that are beyond the individual involved in addiction and in its cure and so there's literally a war going on, on the archetypal level, in terms of these factors. So that's what I was alluding to with the war of the gods – that these powers are way beyond the human and they are both destructive and healing, positive – both directions.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K. So maybe you've just answered what was going to be my next question. You say that you hope to break new ground in this book and I wanted to say, how so? So, did you answer that question, or do you have a little bit more to say about what the new ground might be?

**David Schoen:** Yeah, I would say that what I posit is, what I call archetypal shadow / archetypal evil, slash archetypal evil. It's the same thing, it's different words for the same phenomena. I should say that my particular vantage point is, I'm a phenomenologist first before anything and that is, that what I care about is

understanding the phenomena and I wanted to understand the phenomena of addiction and then I wanted to understand the phenomena of the healing in addiction. So, I don't really care, in a sense, I don't care about theories, or schools, or that everything has to fit together and all that kind of stuff. I basically... to me different theories have value to the extent that they accurately reflect the phenomena and so you have different theories that may reflect different aspects of a phenomenon. So I don't get into defending Jungian psychology or any other view of addiction per se, I'm just looking for the most accurate representation of the image of what's going on in the dynamics of addiction.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay, okay, that kind of helps to set the groundwork for our discussion and probably before we go any further I should ask you, how do you define addiction?

**David Schoen:** I define addiction probably different than anybody else that I know of. To be a true addiction – and I make a distinction between things in our society that we describe as addictions that are, you know, eating too much chocolate and you know, you talk about positive addictions and it's almost like – if everything's an addiction, then nothing's an addiction, O.K?

**Dr. Dave:** Hmm, hmm... Yeah.

**David Schoen:** In terms of clinically, diagnostically – I mean I don't have exclusive rights to the terminology – but when we use the term addiction in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual, we're talking about dependency and you know, what they refer as dependency, as opposed to abuse, which is like messing with it but you're not hooked, you know? With addiction the two things are that first of all, whatever the addictive behavior is, that whether it's drugs, alcohol, sex, food, gambling, you name it, it has to have the potential to kill you – to take over everything in a person's life. I mean ultimately, you know, there's your health, your family, your job, you know, your whole sense of vitality gets swallowed up or put on the altar of the addiction, ultimately. I know many, I know some people I should say, who are dead because they could not maintain the battle against the addiction and they succumbed.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, in fact in the book you make a pretty strong statement, you say "addiction is a death sentence" and that seems like pretty strong language. Is that always the case? I know I've interviewed some people who have suggested that there are non AA ways to go and... or that even social drinking is possible for some people who have been addicts.

**David Schoen:** Right, well, what I would say is that we confuse the diagnostic material. Because there are a lot of, you know... people can drink too much, they can drink too often, they can abuse drugs and alcohol, it doesn't make them addicted. Addiction is where you can't control that addictive behavior. It takes over control of you and the ego. So people who say that there are social drinkers and people can be taught to drink – whatever – it's really important that you start out with an accurate assessment, a definition, a diagnosis of whether you've got an addictive person or a person who is abusing whatever they're doing, O.K?

**Dr Dave:** O.K.

**David Schoen:** Because if they're abusing it, then the normal course of ego strengthening and education and information will do the trick for you, OK? Like in normal therapies and stuff, in normal kinds of mental illness etc. If it's an addiction, you've got to... that doesn't work, you see, and so what I'm basically saying is that it has to take over complete control of the person and... Are you getting a static coming through?

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, I'm hearing a lot of static.

**David Schoen:** Is that better?

**Dr. Dave:** I think it is.

**David Schoen:** So going back to what we were saying, the two elements are that the addiction has to become the number one priority in the psyche and take over everything else, O.K.?

**Dr. Dave:** O.K.

**David Schoen:** And then it has to have the capacity to kill you, in my opinion and I have a basis for that – which is not just that I invented that idea – and that comes from... basically, I went back to the Bill W., the cofounder of AA and Carl Jung's correspondence, where Jung talks about his thoughts on addiction and he basically alludes to the fact that there is... he doesn't call it archetypal evil / archetypal shadow, but he alludes to this phenomena that will destroy you, that will kill you and that the only way is basically to turn to the archetypal grace, or higher power and fellowship and all the things that AA has and so it's sort of, I'm extrapolating material from the letters between Bill W. and Carl Jung in terms of the development of my theory and I think if Jung were here he would vote for it, he would say 'yes, you're on target,' you know.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, I think you're right about that.

**David Schoen:** I wanted to say, what you brought up before, that, you know, people say 'are you saying that AA is the only way?' No, I'm not saying that AA is the only way, or that the 12 steps per se are the only way but what I am saying is that if you have a true addiction and you don't have a program that somehow operates on the basic principles of the 12 steps in some way, in terms of neutralizing the archetypal shadow / archetypal evil and the person taking responsibility for their behavior through, like the rest of the steps 4 through 12, or 4 through 10, then it's not going to work, you know. I had a client therapist who was teaching a smoking cessation class and basically he was trying to help people to stop and some people stopped initially and then they returned to it and some people, of course, stopped and stopped forever and I said to him 'look, you know, if the smoking with these people is truly an addiction, then all the education in the world is not going to make the difference, you have to neutralize the archetypal shadow / archetypal evil aspect, if it's a true addiction and so therefore those people aren't going to be able to stop smoking and hold it, you know. And it made sense to him that that's kind of what he was observing, you know, in the people and I think it's really important to know whether

we're dealing with an addiction, or abuse because we're using totally different strategies initially and it wouldn't make that much difference except that people are literally dying when they're told that they can drink again and they can be taught to drink, if they are addicted, O.K.?

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah.

**David Schoen:** And the guy out in California, I don't remember his name but he has this commercial on television all the time, the "addiction counseling institute" or something and he guarantees people that he can teach them to drink and heal it, without using the 12 steps and AA and all that kind of stuff and I'm thinking, you know, people want to hear that, the addiction wants to hear that but it ultimately... he's not just another charlatan out there which there are a lot of but he's responsible for people's deaths and he needs to realize that because he's selling essentially snake oil to people who are desperate, who are looking for things.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, sure. Now, your distinction between abuse and addiction is an interesting one. It's not one that I've heard before. It does make sense to me the way you describe it and I definitely want to get more into that correspondence between Jung and Bill W. but before we do, say something about what the view of alcoholism and treatment was before the advent of AA.

**David Schoen:** Well, basically before the story began it was considered a degenerative, hopeless disease. If you were a true hard core alcoholic, it was considered a death sentence and you know, they tried therapy and psychoanalysis and rest cures and aversion treatments and everything and nothing, nothing worked before AA and then when AA came along, suddenly according to observations, that maybe a third of the people were recovering and getting sober and staying sober and so when people argue, well that's not such a great statistic and I say well, you know, when the success is zero and you start getting 33% that's pretty good and of course there are no official statistics kept in AA because it's an anonymous voluntary program but the observations are that there's a third who get sober, who get the program and stay sober and there's about a third who go back and forth and then there's a third that basically isn't helped for lots of different reasons – they can't do what needs to be done. But still, a third from nothing is quite an accomplishment and well we can talk about it more but... so before AA and actually – I don't know if you want to get into this at the moment – but Rowland H. went and saw Carl Jung in the 1930s I think it was and he did analysis and he got sober and he came back to Jung and he relapsed as most alcoholics do and he thought he'd get a recharge with Jung – a second course of treatment and Jung basically said 'I'm sorry, Rowland but I don't have anything else to offer you and this is a pretty hopeless situation in my opinion unless you have a spiritual conversion that addresses this.'

Now AA didn't exist and the whole idea of a spiritual conversion in terms of alcoholism and addiction wasn't like 'out there' where people know it like it is today. So Rowland went to the Oxford Movement which was a program that was helping alcoholic addicted individuals and they were having some success but they weren't having complete success because they didn't know what to do with alcoholics who relapsed and so what they were doing was they were kicking them out of the program. So AA learned from the Oxford Movement's position so, long story short, Rowland

got sober through the Oxford Movement and then he was a friend of Bill W.'s and he helped Bill W. get sober and so Bill W. realized that it was Jung's admission, acknowledgement, of his powerlessness and Rowland's powerlessness over the alcohol that became really the first steps of AA and then that you were willing to turn to a higher power and then did so, you know, took the action.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, there're a couple of things I want to respond to in what you've said. First of all, I'm struck by Jung's humility that he was able to say to Rowland you know I'm not going to be able to help you, my approach to analysis isn't going to be able to help you and then he goes onto the second... so that's, I think, fairly humble of him.

**David Schoen:** Absolutely, absolutely. I say in the book he's probably the greatest psychoanalyst in the world and he's saying 'I can't do it' and the humility that was involved in that, I mean, I don't know if you know many therapists but there are not too many therapists who will admit that they can't help and they can't do these things. It's always the patient's resistance, or fault, or whatever. They often are resistant to the idea that they don't have the things in the toolbox to help this person and Jung did. He was aware that he had done all he could, so when Bill W. wrote the letter of appreciation to Jung in terms of the founding – unknowing founding – of AA, Jung didn't know what had ultimately happened to Rowland, so he was happy to get that information.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, now I was surprised to read in your book about this exchange of letters, which, by the way, I think was in 1961 you said?

**David Schoen:** Yeah, 1961, right.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, I've been sort of a fellow traveler of Jungian psychology for about 40 years, not an analyst and I've never heard of this connection between Jung and Alcoholics Anonymous. Am I unusual in that regard?

**David Schoen:** Well, you know, the letters have been out there for a long time and they're acknowledged periodically. There have been a number of... Jan Bauer wrote a book on alcoholism and women and she quoted those letters and the grapevine had those letters through AA and you can find them but nobody really looked closely at what was being said. Or not close enough in my opinion, it's like it needed to be taken apart and analyzed you know, what Bill W. said and what Jung said.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, let me say that another thing that struck me was his suggestion that a religious conversation of some sort was needed and that was of particular interest to me. You mentioned smoking cessation and I've been very involved with hypnosis over the years and I've tried to help people quite smoking with hypnosis and I found I got spotty results, despite the extreme claims that are made by many and then later I was influenced by... Well, I guess I independently I had this notion partly because I grew up in a fundamentalist Christian environment with all sorts of miraculous healings and so on and my grandfather actually, I guess, had been an alcoholic and so on and then he was converted and so I had, independently, I had this notion that some kind of a conversion experience could perhaps get a person over an addiction and so I got the idea of doing, and I read some stuff about sensory deprivation, that seemed

very promising and so I actually tried to offer a commercial service that never really got off the ground but where I wanted to do something like sensory deprivation and have people and you know have some positive suggestions coming in and so on. I actually did an N of 1 with a friend who was heavily addicted to smoking and put him into a totally soundproof, dark, hyperbaric and anechoic, some kind of special chamber that the audiology department had and he went in there for 24 hours and played various suggestions and music and heartbeats and all kinds of things. When he came out of that thing 24 hours later, he looked like a newborn baby, totally transformed and in fact he did quite smoking. He never smoked again. So that's an N of 1.

**David Schoen:** That's great, that's great.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, N of 1. So I'm totally convinced that a religious conversion, that some kind of dramatic, altered state of consciousness kind of experience, can be critical. And in that regard you talked a bit about the influence of William James and his book on AA. Maybe you could just say a word about that.

**David Schoen:** Well, William James... Both Bill W. and Jung were familiar with William James. William James studied varieties of religious experience and what he saw was that all true religious experiences involved the collapse of the ego. That as long as the ego kept trying to run things and call the shots, you weren't going to have the transformation that you needed. So the first step is to admit that you're powerless over alcohol – is for the ego to say 'I'm not in charge any more.' That's the hardest thing for a human being to do, is to say 'I... this isn't something that I can control.' We constantly think we can control it and then in that collapse of the ego, the infected ego is taken out of commission and replaced by the fellowship of AA, and the person working the steps and having a sponsor etc. and then the recovery begins but the first thing that's involved in addiction is this collapse of the ego. That it's like putting the infected ego out of commission for a while until the person is able to recover their normal ego functions in looking at things realistically. Because that infected ego is going to, if it's in charge, it's going to continually find a way to lead the person back to their addiction because it's under the influence of the addiction, which is going to work all kinds of ways to get the person back – things are going too good, things are going too bad, somebody said something, you know, you get angry and some people, it's like, the one thing that could help them in terms of AA, they reject it because they don't like the people, or I don't know. There are lots of...

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, there're always these reasons that, the rationalizations, that come up.

**David Schoen:** Yeah, right but the thing that's interesting is that the very thing that can help you is what you reject, out of hand and if I was diabolical and I think an addiction is, in a psychological sense, that's exactly the way that I would work.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, right.

**David Schoen:** I'd keep you away from what can help you. I've had people – I've continued to work with addicted folks somewhat and later on in recovery and I can literally tell the difference when they're getting ready to start drinking or using again

because their whole attitude, when they walk through the room and the way they look physically, is changed. They're no longer open and receptive and whatever. They're belligerent and they've got all the answers and everything I'm saying is BS and it's like night and day between when they're invested in recovery and when they're beginning to slip back under the influence of the addiction.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, well take us through somewhat systematically here, the commonalities between Jungian psychology and AA, your view of the psychodynamics of addiction, how the 12 steps relate to the process of individuation – that whole ball of wax – if you can kind of move us through it.

**David Schoen:** Basically what I'm saying is that... you've asked a big question!

**Dr. Dave:** I know, I've asked you the whole book (laughter).

**David Schoen:** Yeah, what I'm basically saying is that the 12 steps, or the alcoholic/AA's discernment of the individuation process, with the Jungian process, but it's through them, so when they refer to the Higher Power, we can easily translate that into the Self in the Jungian sense. When they go into the steps about taking responsibility for hurting other people and you're doing your inventory and all that in AA, that's essentially, that's the same work that we have in analysis in terms of the person dealing with their shadow and so there's a lot of elements that are the same, it's just again, if we remember that we're more concerned about phenomena than labeling, it's very similar, or the same phenomena. The thing that I don't see in AA, that Jungian psychology has in its process is, I don't see an overt appreciation of the anima/animus, you know, the contrasexual aspects, in the AA program but I don't know, maybe it's in their somewhere, or maybe it's unnecessary because they're concerned about people getting sober but otherwise it's pretty much the same thing in terms of the individuation process...

**Dr. Dave:** What about the social support part that's so important in AA, is that it's a group, it's a community? I don't know if that's...

**David Schoen:** Yeah, it's exactly... you know Jung breaks it down from his experience in terms of people recovering through an act of grace, through the fellowship of other human beings, or through the work of basically working the program, the steps etc. And AA, even though a lot of the work is done between the analyst and the analysand, one of the things that Jung says is that you don't individuate on Mt Everest, you know, alone. You individuate in the matrix of your life and community and relationships and then he says, like AA, that ultimately we do the analysis and individuation work not for our ourselves, not so that we can become enlightened human beings, but we do it because ultimately our responsibility into the world and to others is expanded and we will be able to contribute, so there's very much a community aspect. It's more direct in AA but it's definitely there in Jungian psychology too.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**David Schoen:** It's just a matter, I think that it's a matter of emphasis is different sometimes but it's there, you know.

**Dr. Dave:** You know going back to your title about the gods – in Jungian psychology we talk about the personal shadow and the archetypal shadow. Maybe you can say a bit about that and how it relates to what you're talking about here.

**David Schoen:** What I'm talking about... the personal shadow is basically influencable, educable and redeemable by working on it. You know, what Jungian psychology encourages but the archetypal shadow is impervious to being integrated, educated, transformed, it's basically beyond that. It can't be healed and I'm not just the one who says that but you can look in terms of Von Franz and Jung and a number of other people and when I read that, I thought 'you know what, there's an aspect in addiction, in alcoholism, that is not redeemable by the (dog growls)... Stop Perce, stop – that's not redeemable by (more growling)...

**Dr. Dave:** It's funny we're talking about the shadow and the dog's started to growl (laughter).

**David Schoen:** Yeah, the dog's growling, somebody's outside walking by and he goes crazy - he's so territorial. Now I've lost my train of thought...

**Dr. Dave:** You were talking about the archetypal shadow...

**David Schoen:** Yeah and the archetypal shadow requires something different, requires an archetypal intervention - that's what I call it, which is the higher power, which is... it's like the only thing that will cancel out, or neutralize, the archetypal shadow / archetypal evil is something of equal power on the other side. So the big guns are archetypal good and healing and transformation is the only thing that can neutralize the archetypal evil / archetypal shadow and so that's why those first 3 steps in AA are so essential in terms of recovery because if you don't do that and you have a true addiction, then you continue with a person who has an infected ego that ultimately is going to bring them back to the addiction. So the archetypal... it's kind of like nuclear radiation or something. You can't mess with it, you can't... it's not like most things in Jungian psychology – we talk about befriending and integrating and whatever. This is something really different and I've gotten... I've upset some people by saying this but again, I'm not inventing these things, they existed in discussion before me but they weren't well known by other people. It's for them to suddenly encounter the idea that there's something in the psyche, or in the psychic system that can't be integrated, or impacted, or transformed in a normal way is something very, very strange to people and then when you add to that, well, if you've got it and you're infected by it, it can kill you, that's pretty hard to accept.

**Dr. Dave:** I've heard the idea that substance addicts, like alcoholics, are in fact reaching for some kind of spiritual transcendence, that there's some kind of a misguided spiritual impulse or something. What's your thoughts on that?

**David Schoen:** Well, my thoughts are the same as Jung's, that it's the... he says that alcohol... the alcoholic is thirsting for the ultimate spirit but it winds up accepting an inferior spirit but that behind the impulse is a desire for wholeness and healing that's misguided, so that's very much part of it and I think that's part of why the addiction is so incredibly dangerous is because it takes that normal, natural desire and it distorts it

and twists it into something that ultimately will destroy you. And yet it's a good desire. Bill W., when he had his first drink, thought he'd almost gone to heaven.

**Dr. Dave:** Right (laughter).

**David Schoen:** Maybe that's an exaggeration but it was a totally numinous experience for him and people have that with different behaviors in terms of addiction so that becomes a... Yeah.

**Dr. Dave:** Who would you say your book is intended for?

**David Schoen:** I would say that it's intended for the non-believer in this sense... AA people who hear my presentations and read my book, I just get an 'Amen' from them. In fact one of the highest compliments I get sometimes is – because I'm not a recovering alcoholic but I've been very close to it – and what they say to me is 'David we don't know how you know what you know but you know - O.K?'

**Dr. Dave:** That is a high compliment.

**David Schoen:** That is, that is. Coming from people in the club that is very, very gratifying. So what it means to me is that my book holds water, that it's not leaking out, it's not a misrepresentation of things.

**Dr. Dave:** Do you think that people who in fact are addicted would benefit from this book?

**David Schoen:** Yes, I've had other people who are addicted that it adds to their information and understanding of what they're up against and it has made a difference and then I wanted to – not only the non believers but particularly therapists – because I find that therapists have their own distorted prejudices and views about alcoholism and addiction and AA that the common person does and I wanted to educate them about what's really going on and they could understand, I'm hoping, the psychodynamic language that I present even if they can't buy the, what some people consider, the brainwashing of AA. Which I don't think it is brainwashing but that's their view – that you replace your drinking with going to meetings and saying the formulas and the sayings and things and that just totally misses the point. So it really is for non-believers, it's for therapists, it's for addicted individuals and it's for Jungian folk because there's been very little in Jungian literature about this and a number of people have told me that it's been incredibly helpful to them in their work with Jungian analysts with alcohol addicted individuals. It's kind of like it gives them a road map to be able to operate with.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, well you know that's probably... Go ahead and finish your thought.

**David Schoen:** Well, just that... and then the common person whose just fascinated and interested in archetypal shadow / archetypal evil and what's this guy got to say about that. That's my audience, so it's pretty broad and it's been pretty well received. I've gotten some hostility (laughter) but I do... I don't know if it's rationalization or what but the hostility has come, I think, due to ignorance, to the people who weren't understanding what I was saying, or that what I was saying was so challenging to

them that they had to reject it. It didn't fit their preconceived notions of Jungian psychology or alcoholism or those things, you know.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, I think this is probably a good place to wrap it up. I think we've pretty much covered the major bases here and people will want to follow up with the book. Is there anything we've left out that you want to say before we wrap it up here?

**David Schoen:** The force be with you (laughter).

**Dr. Dave:** O.K., O.K. (laughter).

**David Schoen:** And the Higher Power too you know. I just think that it's so essential that people would connect with an authentic... and I don't really care what it is, or looks like, as long as it's an authentic spiritual connection, I think. We're all in danger without it, you know. As Jung talks about in his letter, so I would encourage the people out there who hear this and maybe read my book, to find their way to a spirituality that works for them, that could counteract the forces of evil in the universe.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K. Well that's a good place to wrap it. David Schoen it's great to speak with you and thanks for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

**David Schoen:** You're very much welcome. Thank you David.

**Dr. Dave:** Were you to surprised to learn that Alcoholics Anonymous was inspired by both Jung and in part by William James and his Varieties of Religious Experience? Well, as you heard me admit my ignorance publicly, I was. As Dr. Schoen suggested this book should have very broad appeal whether you are a therapist, someone struggling with addiction, the relative or friend of someone wrestling with addiction, or someone interested in the origins of Alcoholics Anonymous, or just generally interested in Jungian thought. My strategic partners have some special offers for you in connection with this interview. First of all, if you use my discount code of 'drdave' on Jung Platform, you can get 25% off the regular \$19.75 price of an hour and a half video DVD of a lecture that Dr. Schoen gave, or 25% off on the \$12.75 for the audio lecture that Dr. Schoen gave on the same topic. Then, as if that's not enough, you can participate in an online book discussion about the book on Depth Psychology Alliance website. Dr. Schoen will be dropping in on the bulletin board type discussion from time to time and will be available every week on a teleseminar with the readers and listeners. You'll find links for these two opportunities on the Shrink Rap Radio website and in my show notes.

**Wrap up:** Thanks to today's guest, Jungian analyst David Schoen, for sharing his insights on the historical relationship between Jung and Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as a Jungian understanding of addiction.