

MYLES KNAPP: GRIT LIT

04/15/2007

Ch-ch-ch-changing never easy to do

[Excerpts]

"You're Addicted to You" by Noah Blumenthal (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, \$15.95, 163 pages, www.bk-life.com)

The subtitle is what got me: "Why It's So Hard to Change -- and What You Can Do About It."

Sounds like the world in a nutshell, doesn't it? Personally, I've always wondered why it was so hard to change. You read the quotes all the time. "People don't change very much." And my all-time favorite: "You could date him. You could marry him, but first you're gonna have to change him -- GOOD LUCK WITH THAT."

With the number of self-help books on the shelves -- last count, 14 trillion and growing faster than the amount of money we are spending on the war in Iraq -- you'd think everybody would be changed by now. The thin would be fat. The fat would be thin.

One reason it seems that change is so difficult is 'cause every program has multiple steps. Often when it would seem that one would do. An example -- AA has 12 steps. Seems like one would do: Stop drinkin' till it causes you trouble.

Plus, most of the self-help books say things such as "you gotta have willpower." I don't know about you, but it seems to me that even the most self-directed, most accomplished folks I know are regularly let down by old Uncle Will.

Blumenthal's preface starts, "I wrote this book because too many people believe that change is a matter of willpower." He mentions that most advisers say if you try to change and fail, you should "try harder." Yeah, like that's gonna work.

Blumenthal's system is pretty simple. Not one step. But not 12, either. First, Raise Awareness of your current behaviors and self-addictions. Next, Build Support for change by surrounding yourself with people who will help support your change. Third: Take Action.

His definition of self-addiction: "Doing the same thing over and over again, knowing that you'll get the same bad results."

If you are doing the same thing over and over again, knowing that you are going to get the same bad results, this book has lots of exercises, strategies and clearly written suggestions for ways to change.