Argument for the social definition of "medicate"

Of many terms used to denote the actions taken quickly and casually to mend serious problems, ' medicate' is a word extensively applied to such movements. The word has at least two meanings, a direct and indirect one, both joined by a common component of meaning.

In both cases, " to medicate" means " to apply aid in order to remedy an undesirable condition". In the direct meaning, " to medicate" is defined in Free Online Dictionary as " treat with medicine". This meaning is widely accepted when the word is used in a general sense to refer to the idea of the process of treating medical illness with substances.

In many cases, however, the word " medicate" takes on an additional meaning when it is used to denote the process in which people try to use medical methods in a random, casual way to solve serious problems. One can try to medicate a serious disease resorting to folk ways to medication, or treat a condition with magic or witchcraft.

" To medicate" has become popular in today's fast-paced society where people are tempted to jump to easy measures to ward off the constantly increasing stream of problems. This effort gave the word an additional connotation of a " quick fix".

This additional shade of meaning dramatically expanded the original meaning of the word. Now the action signified with " medicate" no longer needs to refer to those moves that involve medical substance. One can take drugs to medicate a lovefailure, or get a cup of morning coffee to drivestressaway.

Carl Eliott in his essay " Medicate Your Dissent" applies the word to the spreading inclination of many Americans to turn to antidepressants when they want to correct their depressed state. In many situations, antidepressants serve only as a temporary palliative that treat the symptoms, but not the real problem.

Medicating one's problems with antidepressants and tranquilizers, people try to isolate themselves from what really nags at their hearts, shoving the real issues of their lives into distant corners of their minds, striving never to retrieve them from there. This way of medication creates skeletons in cupboards – neglected matters that are pushed away but in reality often never forgotten.

When a person tries to resort to medication, the short-term fix does not remove the real problem. It can disappear on its own, but will never retreat in the course of " medication". This is the key difference between medication and real treatment. When a person is really treated, the root cause of the problem is addressed, whether successfully or not. In case of medicating, it remains there, triggering setbacks over the long run.

Medicating arose in society because of people's obsession with getting fast results without applying much effort. Medicating is driven by the speed of life that forces people to think of ways to " deceive" time, accomplishing a lot in a short while. Spreading their efforts too thin over many things, people do not have the time and strength to attend to many matters seriously.

Often, one problem will be addressed with detail while all the rest will be " medicated" or addressed without much detail. Taking shortcuts in treating

medical problems, individuals realize that they can bypass usual ways to remedy their problems. More often than not, they are penalised for their self-confidence.

This is why " medicating" often has disastrous consequences. A person can be assured that everything is going well, and he or she is on the way to recovery, while in fact the disease or other problem is growing into an even bigger one. Temporary solutions can place human mind in a state of blissful unawareness when a person revels about a problem being solved and fosters passivity with regard to real issues.

In my experience, the most vivid example of " medicating" in the latter sense of the word was a married couple that tried all kinds of short-term solutions to a problem they had. The wife moved to her husband's place of residence in rural Austria, having lived all her life in the US. Her urban background left her totally unprepared for life in a rural community in a foreign land where she did not know the language and felt that the local residents did not accept her.

They tried all kinds of solutions that would temporarily solve the problem – she joined various local clubs, engaged in community life, tried to work as a freelance designer taking orders online. In the end, like so many people trying to overcome their problems, she took to anti-depressants so as to remove her worries and concerns. Surely, anti-depressants did not save her marriage that ended on the rocks after barely two years offamilylife, after passionate dating and a honeymoon filled with explosivehappiness.

Kara (my friend's name) realized too late that she should not have entered this relationship at all, for although they were enthusiastic about each other, they were two different people with differing backgrounds, which made family life difficult if not impossible.

No matter what she tried when she got to Austria, her inner strength andcommunicationskills were not enough to make her life there not only enjoyable, but even tolerable. Instead, her attempt at medicating her pain over separation with her relatives and her nativeculturewith anti-depressants gave a serious blow to herhealthas she developed side effects associated with the drugs.

Thus, " to medicate" means to invent short-term solutions to long-term problems. The term is more often used to refer to actions that involve the medical component to them; however, it is also used to denote actions that use other means than medical substances. A person can resort to any means to solve a serious problem, but as long as this action uses an ineffective, yet easy trick for the resolution of the issue, the action is " medicating", and not real treatment.

Works Cited

Elliott, Carl. Medicate Your Dissent. 6 July 2006 .

Medicate. Free Online Dictionary. 6 July 2006 .