# Book Club: Reflecting on Life and Death with Leo Tolstoy's 'The Death of Ivan Ilyich'

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| **Release date:** | Wednesday 17 September on MHPN Presents |
| **Presenters:** | Sidney Bloch AM, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry, Honorary Senior Psychiatrist<br><br>Jeremy Holmes MD FRCPsych, Honorary Professor at the University of Exeter, Retired Medical psychotherapist and Consultant Psychiatrist |

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**Host** (00:01):

Hi there. Welcome to Mental Health Professionals Network podcast series MHPN's aim is to promote and celebrate interdisciplinary collaborative mental health care.

**Sid Bloch** (00:19):

Welcome everybody to this episode of MHPN Presents Book Club. In essence, we are going to have a discussion about a book. So my own name is Sidney Bloch. I am a psychiatrist working at Melbourne University. It's my role to choose the book and also choose my guest. The book I've chosen is The Death of Ivan Ilyich. Some of you may know this book, some of you may have read it by the end of our discussion, I hope everybody will run to either read or reread it. It is one of Leo Tolstoy's finest bits of writing, and it's not as long as War and Peace. In fact, it's a novella. It's very short. Now, the second introduction, I should say is Jeremy Holmes. Jeremy, thank you for participating. I'm so thrilled that we can do it even though you are in England and I'm here in Australia. Why did I choose you, do you think?

**Jeremy Holmes** (01:23):

Well, number one, thank you for inviting me. It's always nice to have a conversation with you, Sid, and we've had many conversations over the last 40 years or so that we've known each other. And thank you also for choosing The Death of Ivan Ilyich because I think it was a brilliant choice for us to discuss and for people in the mental health field to think about and I'm really looking forward to our conversation. So I'm in the UK. I'm a psychiatrist psychotherapist based at the University of Exter in the UK.

**Sid Bloch** (01:55):

And indeed one of the most distinguished people in the field. I must tell you, don't be modest and say, no, that's rubbish. It's true. As Jeremy remarked, we've enjoyed a wonderful long standing, both professional and personal relationship, and part of that is sharing a deep interest in what we loosely call

psychodynamics. Shouldn't get too caught up with what that term means, but we'll see how it evolves. We also shared interest in philosophy, ethics, and for today the humanities, by which we mean literature, art, film, whatever. Now literature has had a central role in my career for sure, and in life generally. I'm an avid reader and I belong to a book club and all that sort of thing. And I've also had the good fortune to edit the Australian New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry. What about you, Jeremy, in terms of the humanities?

**Jeremy Holmes** (02:50):

Well, I think I'm naturally drawn to the humanities and it's just a bit easier to make one's living as a doctor than it is as a English teacher or something, which would probably be my other career option. I think the important thing is psychiatry and psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, this wonderful hybrid discipline which has one foot in the sciences, but the other in the humanities. And I think, and that's worked for me, I wrote a book called The Therapeutic Imagination, which is a collection of essays about literature and how literature can improve and enhance our work as psychotherapists. So it's a great opportunity today I think, to think about Tolstoy and how Tolstoy can be a helpful supervisor for us as mental health professionals.

**Sid Bloch** (03:37):

Absolutely, and it can illuminate so many aspects, not just of clinical work, but of life in general. And we'll come to that a bit later. I mean, why did he write this novella after all those major works? He writes the short novella about death and dying. And not only that, in the same early 1880s, he writes a very honest account of the turbulence within him. He was even thinking of suicide, but the whole area of death and dying and existential thinking about the nature of life and the purpose of life and where do we find meaning really was a big source of pressure on him. And I guess that's the way I look at it too, that we can look at life in general today as opposed to just what do I do with a patient who, but obviously we can incorporate that as well.

(04:31):

Now I'd just like to elaborate a bit further on what you've said. Why have I chosen this book? It's a short novella, surely there can't be much in it, but the subject that Tolstoy focuses on, let's call it death and dying, he does this in a profound way. In fact, it's one of the finest, most profound bits of writing on this very subject. So it's a set of insights into an experience which he was facing at the time. And guess what, which we, that's you who are listening to this and the two of us must all face at one point to another and we dunno when it'll be, and we dunno how we will approach this, I dunno what to call it, but this experience, tall story, as I said, grappled with his own existential dilemmas. And this you can find, and I would recommend that you have a look at a similar size book, the one called Confession in which he literally does confess all the turmoil that's within him. Perhaps I can end off with this quote. He says, is there any meaning in my life that wouldn't be destroyed by the death that inevitably awaits me? Why bother to trouble yourself with all these existential challenges when death is what we face? So Jeremy, I wonder if you could begin by sharing your reflections on the book in a sort of more general way, and then we'll obviously get into some of the structure and the details.

**Jeremy Holmes** (06:11):

Yeah, well thank you, thanks for reminding us that this great man Tolstoy who I think he was sometimes described as the second czar in Russia. He was totally revered, was an incredibly tortured soul himself, had a very, very difficult childhood. Both his parents died. He was bought up by I think an aunt, and life didn't really run smoothly for him at all. He had a very passionate love affair with his wife for the first five years of their marriage. But things deteriorated as life went on. And it wasn't just Tolstoy who was suicidal, so was she. And as probably some of you know, he actually Tolstoy ended up, he ended his life in a miserable way, running away from his wife, jumping on a train with his youngest daughter and then dying in a railway station. So we've got a sort of parallel in a way between this kind of tortured life of the author and this sort of marvellous bit of literature that you are asking us to think about. And I mean, I love The Death of Ivan Ilyich. I love all Tolstoy novels, but the great thing about The Death of Ivan Ilyich is you can read it in an afternoon, which isn't really quite the case with War and Peace.

**Sid Bloch** (07:21):

You could read it several times in an afternoon. It is so concise, isn't it?

**Jeremy Holmes** (07:26):

You read faster than me. General thoughts about it are, well first of all, again, for us as mental health professionals, this is going back to an earlier point, the author, the writer, the artist. One of the key features of being an artist in particular, perhaps in literature is the capacity to put yourself in other people's shoes. And after all, that's what we as mental health professionals have to do. We all are tired of having to see what it might feel like to be this person suffering from a psychological illness. Now, what's so clever about this novel is that it starts in a sideways fashion. Ivan Ilyich, right from the start and the title is The Death of Ivan Ilyich, Ivan has died and what we get is not Ivan Ilyich himself. What we get are his family and friends. And ironically, they react in different ways. The friends are saying to themselves, it's quite painful to say this.

(08:23):

Thank goodness it's him and not me. And he immediately taps into the way in which we react to the death of someone we know. His colleagues immediately start thinking, I wonder who's going to get his job. And likewise his wife who's sort of somewhat unsympathetic character, but we do get to see her point of view as well. His wife's immediately thinking, I'm going to be penniless. What's going to happen to me in our family? And it's important to note that he has two children, a rather beautiful late adolescent girl and then a 12-year-old son. And he has experienced death before because it is mentioned that some of his children had died. So we come as it were at the book sideways, and then we take a deep breath and we get the life history of Ivan Ilyich. You could say the book has three, or the novella has three parts, this sideways,

(09:20):

how's everyone reacting? What happens at the funeral? That kind of thing. Then we get his life history and he's a very successful man. He's a judge. He's done very well in the law, is clever, he's attractive, he's amusing. He loves playing Wist. These days it would be bridge. And then the last third of the book, or the third component as it were, is the absolute misery and pain and horror where he has an illness that he's never quite specified, but as death creeps up on him and takes over his life. So I'm really just mapping out, as it were, the structure of the book and all the time, because Tolstoy is so brilliant. We

identify with him, we identify with his success, we identify with his terror of death. And as I think Sid's going to describe, perhaps at the end we can feel some kind of sense of relief that it is possible to live with this horrible fact of death, which all of us deny at some level, but which is going to come to us or at some point. So Sid, I've been talking too much. It's over to you now.

**Sid Bloch** (10:31):

No, no, that's fine. You've done brilliantly. By the way, when you say there's a, I'll call it positive or I dunno what to call it actually that last paragraph or two when he's facing death, absolutely, directly maybe the pinnacle of the story, but we don't know that it's coming do we. It comes as a sort of surprise.

**Jeremy Holmes** (10:54):

I was thinking, Sid, if I can just, this is a little bit of a, not exactly a spoiler because we're going to come to this, but it's that phrase coming to terms with, which is a kind of cliche and everyone would say, well, I've got to come to terms with death. My parents have died. Some people have had horrible untimely deaths of a child or a loved one, but Tolstoy really explores and enters into what that actually might mean.

**Sid Bloch** (11:21):

Yeah, I also, when I read the story and then The Confession, pray that Tolstoy himself in the railway station had a similar experience, but what we'd read is that it was awful. The whole world heard about this death and they all came to this rather isolated place. He said that I had to leave home and my 47-year-old marriage, I needed to breathe. I needed, it's like an escape from the torment. I just want to go a bit further into the structure so that you can then appreciate the sort of people involved and what is happening and how things change. So the characters, by the way, this could be turned into a play. I know this for sure because when I got very excited about this story, first time I went to a very prominent playwright in Melbourne called Jack Hibberd, and I asked him if he would dramatise the story, which he did for the sake of the medical students and all others, and it actually was featured in what was then the annual Melbourne Festival of the Arts.

**Jeremy Holmes** (12:32):

Can I come in here? This is really interesting, I didn't know that. And of course you're absolutely right and how brilliant that it has been turned into a play. But one of the things I wanted to just mention is again, we're sort of revering to story, but I think it's okay to revere a told story like we revere Freud or you more Shakespeare. Shakespeare that we get the outside and the inside of a human being, and that's what's so brilliant about this. So we see Ivan Ilyich in his prime marching into the court. Everyone stands when he comes in. They all listen to his judgments with his bated breath. But we also hear about what's going on inside Ivan, how he feels this horrible fear of death, this horrible pain in his side, his regrets about his life. And so in a way, a novel, I'm not saying this can't happen in a stage play as well, but there's something about the novel, which is such a wonderful machine if you like, for telling us how our behaviour and our inner life intersect. And again, I think we as mental health professionals, our patients come to us because something isn't working in their external life. They're depressed, they can't go to

work or they are in trouble with the police or something. And we are trying to reconstruct what's the inner world that connects with this external behaviour.

**Sid Bloch** (13:59):

Absolutely. Okay. We've said a fair bit about Ivan. There's much more that we can say even though the text is short. But somehow Tolstoy gives us this vivid picture, as you said earlier, the way he's career blossomed, the marriage somehow or another wasn't as he would've wanted, but he comes to terms with it and so on. So just very quickly, by the way, we have to discuss this in summary form because we've only got maximum of 45 minutes. So this is with the expectation that you will read the book in your own time and make more of it. So we've discussed Ivan, the lawyer, and then we've mentioned his wife Praskovya, who is a bit of a difficult character to analyse clearly. Sometimes she weeps for him, other times she's dismissive. You mentioned that she worries about her pension and she asks one of Ivan's friends, Pyotr, can you arrange for me to get a decent pension?

(15:05):

Those sorts of things. Then my view, and I'm sure you will agree that the character of Gerasim, who is literally a servant from a peasant background, he probably came from a family working on the soil and so on. I won't say more about him at the moment, but bear in mind that Gerasim is so central to the story and he helps us to understand what death is about. Now I just want to mention the other characters and then we'll go into the different types of reactions that you mentioned earlier of the people in this scenario. So then we have his best friend, let's say the longstanding friend Pyotr who he studied with, and he's the fellow who wants to go and play cards and what a waste of an evening have they all come to the house of mourning, the body's laid out in the Russian Orthodox church. And then as we heard from Jeremy, he's got two children living, Liza, I won't say more about her but we'll come to her a bit later. And the son, Vasya.

**Jeremy Holmes** (16:17):

He's a very important character.

**Sid Bloch** (16:18):

Very important character. And in a way I admire that boy, the lad, but he's almost one of the most mature figures, although he's the youngest. So those are the main characters. And then as Jeremy tells us, "the doctors". Now if anybody listening here is a doctor, you should go away and look at yourself in the mirror and compare yourself to the doctors.

**Jeremy Holmes** (16:46):

Let's not forget that you and I are doctors and so it makes both of us or certainly made me squirm a bit hearing about these doctors.

**Sid Bloch** (16:53):

When people ask me, well what have you done in your career? I say, well, essentially I did a medical degree but I'm not a real doctor. And they say, well, what do you do? Well, I've worked with people with

mental psychological troubles and so on, but it's only way of deprecated myself. Okay, we don't have to go into that sideways dimension that you mentioned. He's dead, he's laid out, he's going to be buried. There's question of the plot in the cemetery that is fairly clear, the reactions of the people we have mentioned his close friend who really doesn't want to be there and say, oh, at least I'm not in that coffin. And his wife who's more interested in the material side of things. And then would you like to describe how the illness begins? Because that's quite dramatic too.

**Jeremy Holmes** (17:45):

Well, alright, he's sort of ambitious Ivan and he is also has a few setbacks in his career. He doesn't do quite as well and doesn't get the jobs exactly he wants. And his wife is quite materialistic and she's kind of portrayed anyway as nagging him, get a job that's better paid. Anyway, eventually he does get a job in a provincial town as a chief prosecutor or something like that, and he finds a fantastic apartment and he's getting it all ready for his wife to come and he is up fixing mean I can identify with this, fixing the drapes. Anyway, he falls and injures his side and he thinks nothing much of it. It's painful, but he thinks I'm a strong man. It's nothing. But gradually this pain begins not to go away, to develop, to become insistent. So he then starts to get ill and lose weight and feel ill and be less effective in his eyes in his job.

(18:50):

And so then the doctors come in and there's a number of different doctors, Sid will tell us what they are. One of them is a sort of super specialist, extremely expensive from Moscow or something. One of them is a kind of gp. They're all doing their best. And the GP for instance, I know makes sure that he rubs his hands very carefully so he doesn't have cold hands when he examines Ivan's abdomen, that kind of thing. But they are portrayed as sort of missing the point because the main point is that this man has an incurable illness and he's going to die. When Ivan asks, "well, am I going to live or die?" they equivocate. It's as though they themselves can't really face up to the reality of death and to the reality of the limitations of what they have to offer. They don't have to offer much at all, have they?

(19:41):

There's a kind of parallel, he's a slightly pompous lawyer, they're slightly pompous doctors, so you can't help squirming a bit and thinking, well, what would be the appropriate response when Ivan says, well, am I going to die or not? But the contrast here is with Gerasim, the peasant boy who looks after him, who wipes his bottom and he gets the bedpan and who provides comfort. And one of the reasons he provides comfort is that he's not frightened of death. He knows that everyone's got to die. And he says this, no, Ivan keeps saying, I'm really sorry and I wish I didn't have to ask you to do this. Ivan finds he likes putting his legs up on this peasant shoulders. It relieves the pain and will stand there for hours allowing him to do this. And Ivan feels embarrassed about this, but this lovely peasant boy just says, don't worry, I'm here.

(20:37):

I haven't got much to do. I've got to chop a few logs later. But that can wait. I mean obviously there's a slight ideology here because as you probably know, Tolstoy, the somewhat glorified simplicity and the peasantry and he was one of the first landowners to liberate the serves. But nevertheless, this boy is a very significant contrast I would say to the medical profession and this kind of simplicity and honesty and a kind of sense which is incredibly relevant. I dunno how it is in Australia, but in England, doctors

now have horrible time constraints. They're told you're only allowed to see the patient for 10 minutes. I've always said a good doctor will always give the patient the feeling that they've got all the time in the world, a doctor, a mental health professional. Even if that time turns out to be 10 minutes. And this boy this peasant, in a way he gives Ivan that message. Don't worry, I'm here if you need me when you need me. I've got all the time in the world for you.

**Sid Bloch** (21:38):

I just want to add one or two things about what you've said. Gerasim is not really a boy. I mean he's a young man and he's been probably working for the estate. Tolstoy is very wealthy, he had a huge estate. But as you've said, he gave it all away because he thought that poverty was a more honourable way of living a life. Equality, he's religious attitude changed quite substantially throughout his life. In the end, by the way, he discounts Russian Orthodox Christianity, it's full of falsity and so on. And he says that love, I like that emphasis and the tissue of Jesus are the main constituents of how he sees his own religious experience and spirituality. But just to get back to Gerasim, this is relevant because he's also a believer. I'm not sure how he approaches religion, but I quote him now, it's God's will that he'll die. We shall all come to it someday. We shall all of us die. So what's a little trouble? That's the trouble of keeping his legs up or whatever. Isn't that fantastic? I mean, in two sentences you've got this deep existential philosophy, if you like, from this young man, and I take it it's partly a religious type of upbringing, partly it's his nature. We don't really know unless you have some views about it.

**Jeremy Holmes** (23:13):

And I totally agree with you and it's a beautiful passage which I too also had marked in my copy. So what we've got is you might say kind of a normal upper middle class life that Ivan leads and is ambitious. He wants money, he's got a wife, he's got kids, he wants to have a nice house, he wants respect in the world. I mean, which of us doesn't want all those things, but as the novel or novella progresses and as death begins to take over, we don't quite have a time scale, but it feels to me as though we're in the last three months of his life, all that falls away. He realises the emptiness of his life, which isn't really empty. I mean he's had quite a good life and he's had nice love affairs. Even Tolstoy says he enjoyed making love too, he doesn't specify which woman and he's made money, he's had respect.

(24:05):

All those things actually are sort of as it were valid, but they somehow dissolve away in the face of death. And he feels that his life has been somewhat false. And this peasant young man, he doesn't have that regret. He just accepts life as it is. And I think that is the tall story in philosophy. I dunno if this is an evidence-based study, but I have read people who write about hospice care. This is relevant to us as healthcare professionals. Regret is almost universal phenomenon. And people who are dying, people look back on their lives as Ivan looks back on his life, they usually wish that they'd spent more time with their family or that they'd valued their family more and their ambition less. Now, whether this might be a somewhat male perspective that I'm identifying with and perhaps the women who are listening to this podcast might see it rather differently, but I think the whole story sort of depicts this beautifully. And again, with the help of Gerasim the peasant, we get this contrast between the kind of vain pursuit of the worldly success as against the realities of life, which are about love and finitude, things that come to an end including life.

**Sid Bloch** (25:27):

In that sense, I think he's being a bit harsh on himself. I don't think he's being bombastic or pompous or unemphatic towards others, but it's a time to look back to reflect. I think the word reflect is the big word for me. And there are things that he regrets and other things that obviously have been of value. I'm rather prone to regret myself. I think if only I had not said that or whatever. And I always remind myself with a cartoon from the New Yorker, which as the fellows walking along the street and there's a big billboard and it says, regret nothing. And he turns to himself and he says, I wish I could have said that. So there's regrets in all our lives. Sometimes our regrets mount when we're feeling awful about something and we've let people down or whatever. But anyway, we'll leave that aside.

(26:27):

You mentioned the word falsity, which is mentioned I think in the text and it's a key word because Ivan says maybe to himself, I've lived a false life, it's been superficial, this, that, and the other existential questions. And then he's very angry towards people around him in the family except for Garris and his son, because he says they're all being false. They're all deceiving me. They're all trying to impress upon me that I'm just ill if only I took my medicine. His wife is particularly harsh about this and he's absolutely hateful about people deceiving him like that because as the weeks have gone by, you mentioned three months, but as the weeks pass by, he knows that death is going to await him. And so the self-deception earlier on, he has hope, but as the pain is not lessened by anything, he realises that there's something that's lethal about whatever it is which we don't ever know about.

**Jeremy Holmes** (27:35):

I just want to just underline what you said about hate. The word hate is used many times. And in a way we start to at these days start to feel quite upset by Ivan because he's absolutely consumed by hatred and all these people are trying to help him. He just hates them. And I think we should just remind ourselves again as mental health professionals, how behind hate lies fear. He's actually terrified and it's kind of easier to hate than to feel the fear. And the second point is so common, isn't it? I mean that the wife, she too is in a state of denial. She can't quite face up the fact that her husband's going to die. And so she persuades herself that if only he would take his medicines and behave himself as it were, he would survive. And I think that's a very common kind of response. So that one of the things one takes away from this book is that we're all to greater or letter extent in a sort of slight state of denial about the fact that we are going to die.

**Sid Bloch** (28:35):

Yeah. When he knows that death is imminent. I was really struck by his need for pity. The word is used often and he reminisces about his childhood where people really cared for him. And in his later life, particularly this period, they have no pity for me, only Gerasim. And at the end, the young son and I found that word very telling. It's as if he's really back to his vulnerable, if you like infantile state. He said, I would place the word pity with love care, that sort of thing. But that's a desperate thing for him. And he feels isolated and alone and he wants Gerasim to spend more time with him.

**Jeremy Holmes** (29:20):

Sure. Can I just say again, for mental health professionals, I think that's so beautifully done that all of us, we have our adult grownup professional, et cetera selves, but that inside there's still a little child wanting the very basics of life to be cared about, to be loved, to be looked after. And that in the end is sort of what we're left with as it were.

**Sid Bloch** (29:47):

Yeah. Well, I was insistent in my own head that we should do another podcast on other elements in this story and then bring in The Confession. But who knows, maybe we'll get to do that.

**Jeremy Holmes** (29:59):

No, Sid, I won't let you get away with that because that's what one thinks when one is dying. The thing about dying as opposed to living is that you always think when you're alive, there's another chance, there's another life I could live. I could have a second session. Whereas what this novella is so brilliant about it is showing that a death is an end. And the question is coming back to what you are building up to. How do we come to terms with this ending? How do we turn it into something that isn't a cataclysmic horror?

**Sid Bloch** (30:31):

I dunno how many patients that you've had dealings with at this phase of their lives. But two lots come to my mind. I worked in the psycho-oncology field. MHPN has networks of that type of approach to work. So one of them, he wasn't really in touch with himself or with me, but I think he was in touch with himself because he said, why should I die? He's full of morphine. And he died about 10 minutes later. I was there three o'clock in the morning. He's a relative. Anyway, won't going into more with the detail. And then another case, I'm walking with an elderly gentleman whose wife has died a few months before and he says, I'm going out like a candle. In other words, why should I die? I am dying. But a mild protest, I couldn't believe what I was hearing and going out like a light brings us to the last phase. Is it true that when people have a death after surgery or whatever, they always talk about seeing lots of light?

**Jeremy Holmes** (31:40):

Yes, I've read that.

**Sid Bloch** (31:42):

Yeah. I always am rather mystified by that. Not mystified, but curious. So we come to the end, let's share this one where now he's dying. There are people knowing that he's dying. In fact, one of the people say at the very end, he's gone and Ivan hears this and he says, yes, I am gone. I am, I'm gone. But before that, he says, I cannot allow my miserable state to make my relatives family and others miserable. In other words, this is not what I want to share and give as my legacy and misery. He is absolutely dreaded in and petrified and all the that. But he suddenly, it's an epiphany in place of death. I'm quoting him now. He says there was light and his last words. So that's what it is, deaf light. And the last two words, what joy, exclamation mark, what did you think of that epiphany? I'm going to call it that.

**Jeremy Holmes** (32:53):

I've got two little comments. I mean one, if we just go back one page, it says, it was nearly the end of a third day. We got a different translation. By the way, Sid, an hour before his death. At that very moment, the schoolboy's son crept in to see his father and came over to his bed. The dying man was still screaming, desperately waving his arms about his hand, happened to catch the boy's head. The boy took hold of it, pressed it to his lips and burst into tears. This was the very moment when even Ilyich had fallen through and seen a light. And it was revealed to him that his life had not been what it should have been, but that it still could be put right. So I read that as a kind of critique of this rather narcissistic man who suddenly through relationship with his son, through relationship, through the fact that he suddenly feels he loves this boy and the boy loves him.

(33:55):

So he moves as it were from narcissism to relationship. And at that moment, therefore as it were, death no longer has any fear for him because there's a kind of continuity. The sun is going to continue and the sun is a kind of continuation of him, but also all his relationships, he may end, but they will continue the wife, his friends, and life itself. So that's how I sort of read that. And then as you say, he then suddenly feels pity. So he suddenly again escapes from his absolute preoccupation with his pain and himself into thinking about what it's going to be like for them. And somehow that liberates him. And I think we ought to just say, one of the things I feel about literature that we as therapists can learn from is that literature is always somewhat ambiguous. There's never an absolutely clear message.

(34:50):

And in fact, a novel that has a clear message is often rather a boring or bad novel. I think what's so beautiful about this last couple of pages of this novella is that you can read it quite a number of different ways, and I think the same is true of us in relation to our work. We can read our patients in a number of different ways. We're never going to give it fully, right? We have to have a humility in the face of psychological illness and ultimately humility in the face of life itself and the fact that it's finite.

**Sid Bloch** (35:20):

Yeah. I like the way you bring in humility because my hero in the Jewish tradition philosophy is Maimonides 12th century, and I've studied him for years, but he talks about a strategic ideas about traits, personality traits, and they're opposites. So you shouldn't be too irascible and you shouldn't be over kind or whatever. There are several polarities like that, but that's Aristotle, and he doesn't claim that he's the originator of that. But he says, there's only one trait, one attribute in life that has no spectrum. What is it? It's humility. You are humble, and it's not as if you can be over humble. I think maybe you can or not be humble at all. But anyway, that word that you use brings me close to Maimonides. By the way, we will produce a list of other resources that we've mentioned today and indeed other works that have impressed us in relation to the subject.

**Jeremy Holmes** (36:25):

Well, I'm not sure what closure is, but I really enjoyed this conversation. I've enjoyed working with you again, Sid takes me back to those days at University College Hospital, London, where we did family therapy together, and many conversations we've had in Melbourne. I come to Melbourne regularly and it's been a really stimulating morning for me and afternoon for you. Thank you very much for inviting me and thank you to the audience for listening to us.

**Sid Bloch** (36:52):

I echo the last sentiment now. We hope you've enjoyed this conversation about Ilyich as much as we have. And if you want to learn more about me or Jeremy, you can find out bios on what they call the landing page of this episode. On the landing page, you'll also find a link to the novella. Now we value your feedback, so please follow the link and let us know whether you found this episode helpful, provide some comments and suggestions maybe to help shape the future of MHPN podcasts. This is an exciting phase of the network and we want to do more and more of them. Don't forget also to subscribe to MHPN presents and finally, thank you for engaging with us. We couldn't see you, but we felt you were with us. Thanks again and see you soon.

**Host** (37:52):

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