

# Shannon's Interview with Richie Fasano

June 1, 2018

## *Where There's Life, There's Hope*



**SL: Please describe your childhood**

**RF:** My name is Richard Fasano and I am twenty-five years old. I was born and raised in Charlestown my entire life. My childhood was good, I come from a big family which I consider to be very solid and always have one another's back.

I have always been so grateful for my only brother and best friend Tommy and two amazing parents. I know my parents weren't perfect but I always knew they loved me and would do anything for me. I attended the Harvard Kent and Warren Prescott School and struggled with learning. I played almost every sport and had tons of friends

**SL: How and when did addiction begin manifesting and at what age?**

**RF:** At the age of nine I started drinking and smoking weed and it progressed to taking pills and smoking angel dust. I loved the

way it made me feel. I smoked it to feel normal and to feel ok with myself. Before I knew it, I was sniffing cocaine regularly and taking Oxycontin and Percocet's – I thought I was just partying and having fun.

**SL: How did your addiction progress from there:**

**RF:** When I was eighteen my brother Tommy was shot in the head right in front of me. I was so scared and stressed out while trying to be strong for my brother and my parents – so I turned to heroin while my brother was in ICU on life-support. The doctors said my brother wasn't going to make it, and I didn't know how to handle these types of feelings. Thankfully, my brother did pull through and I'm so proud of the man he is today.

I have been in multiple detoxes, holdings, residential programs. I was on methadone, suboxone and vivitrol, even drug court, I've done it all. By this time, I knew I had a serious problem and I knew I needed help, but I never wanted to fully surrender - I wanted to do things Richie's way.

**SL: Can you describe your path towards recovery?**

**RF:** A little over six months ago I made the courageous decision to leave that one squared mile I grew up in, the place that holds my heart, the place that is all I ever knew and move 3,500 miles away to California for treatment for my addiction.

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My road to recovery has not been easy but I can happily say that as of May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018 I will be six months along in my recovery. Since that day, I have not used any mind-altering substances, I have not found it necessary to put a drink or drug in my body. This is the most time I have ever had since picking up that first drug at the age of nine.

It's not just about the amount of time, it's not just about not physically picking up a drink or drug – it's about what I am doing to maintain my recovery and grow into the person I was always supposed to be.

#### **SL: What has helped you maintain your Recovery?**

**RF:** The only people I know or hang out with in California are people in recovery. I attend 12 step meetings, either Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous on a daily basis – it's my medicine. I got a sponsor who guides me through the 12 steps. I finally put my pride and ego aside and started working on myself physically, mentally and spiritually. The spiritual aspect is vital to my recovery and I never knew how important it really is.

I had no problem settling for being dope sick all time or being in jail, it was only a matter of time before I would have ended up dead if I kept going down that path of destruction.

I also have to thank Sarah Coughlin and Shannon Lundin who have never ever given

up on me, even when I gave up on myself – these are two people who have always helped me and I wouldn't be where I am today if they haven't always been there to see me through some of the worst times in my life.

#### **SL: What advice would you give someone just beginning their steps towards recovery?**

**RF:** The advice I would give would be – as long as you have breath there is hope, don't ever give up on yourself, there is a better way of life without alcohol and drugs and life is worth living. It does take hard work, but it is so worth it. If I can do it anyone can do it and I can actually say for the first time, I am really living life.

