



## Strength in Surrender: My First Days at Next Step Recovery

By Hogan England

It was February 2016, and I had just been discharged from a treatment center because of refusal to adhere to the program's rules. When I arrived at Next Step, I was surly, frustrated and unsure of whether I could or even wanted to stay clean.

Knowing the staff at Next Step was aware of my delinquent behavior at the previous facility, I was expecting a stern and cold reception upon admission. Much to my surprise, the staff welcomed me with warm smiles and hugs! Next Step had even reached out to my parents to keep them updated on my travel to Asheville and ensure them I was safe. When I arrived, I immediately felt welcome as staff members helped with my luggage and took me on a tour of the facility.

Once I got settled in, I was able to get acquainted with some of my roommates. They were very quick to lend me a hand and also very willing to introduce me to the daily schedule at Next Step. The warm reception from my roommates gave me a sense of belonging that was instrumental to my early recovery process. It was inspiring to be surrounded by a group of individuals who were eager to welcome me into their living space.

This early feeling of ease and comfort helped me gather myself and engage in the process of recovery. The structured schedule at Next Step was crucial and gave me the opportunity to explore and discover a 12-step recovery program. The staff that provided such a warm welcome are also fellow recovering addicts. There were various degrees of clean time on staff and each of them helped me get on my own path of recovery.

I'm proud to say that in February 2016 I made the right decision in surrendering to a recovery lifestyle. I certainly encountered challenges in the beginning, but the staff at Next Step showed me nothing but love and empowered me to see the importance of staying clean and sober. Had I not been welcomed to their program with such compassion, I might not have made the decision to stick around and accept the help they offered me. I have been clean over a year now, and I owe a great deal of my success in recovery to the people of Next Step Recovery.

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