

Phenice's Interview with Dylan Zimmerle

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Life Is Worth Living



PZ: Please describe your childhood

DZ: Being brought up in Charlestown, coming from a single mother of four kids my childhood consisted of her trying her hardest to keep me active and out of trouble. She did her best and got me involved in all the sports and after school programs. My childhood was not bad by any means. I was very busy with ice hockey, baseball and football and on top of those activities I would go to the boys and girls club. I remember the times I would play alerio and roller hockey at Eden Street Park and think, how could life get any better. I moved up with my father to New Hampshire for a few years from 5th grade to 8th grade and learned that there are more places in life than Charlestown. All I could think about while living up there was how much I missed being in the town and I would count down the days until the weekends would roll around and I would return to this one square mile town

known as "God's Country". Soon enough I would return for good.

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

DZ: Let me get this out there that I don't come from a family of addicts or alcoholics. It's not in my genes. I know for me looking back at my usage that first time I put a drink in me that I had this disease. I was 13 years old and my friends at the time and I got a bottle of the cheapest vodka and mixed it in Gatorade bottles and we drank until we had none left. All I recall from that first time was waking up the next day in my bed covered with dirt from head to toe with my mother yelling at me telling me I'm grounded. My next thought was wow I need to drink again. Which is what I did.

PZ: How did your addiction progress from there:

DZ: After drinking on the weekends for some time I was introduced to weed. After smoking that first time I thought I found happiness and thought weed was all I needed in life. I thought it was so good that I ended up selling it for some time. During that time, I tried many drugs, from benzos to cocaine. By the time I turned 17, someone I looked up to asked me if I'd want to start selling perc 30's. After seeing the money that could be made I didn't hesitate to say yes. The one thing I was told was to not do them. Always chasing the next high I tried them. Which led to me doing 2-3 a day, to me doing 2-3 at a time, which ended up with me doing up to 15 a day. My hustle sure enough ended after a few years and I was left broke financially and broke internally, along with a vicious habit. I would always tell myself I wouldn't do heroin. Sure enough, my addiction led me to selling my soul

some more and trying heroin. Which led to me doing just about anything to get that next fix.



PZ: Can you describe your path towards recovery?

DZ: No matter what happened to me during my addiction whether it be going to jail or overdosing, or who I hurt whether it be a good friend and a very close family member I wasn't ready until I was ready. After going to detox twice for other people, the third time I went was for me. I was sick of killing myself slowly and bringing the few people that stuck by my side down with me. That is what started the journey I've been on for 14 months now. I was finally at that point of desperation and had just enough willingness to surrender at last. I gave up on the thought that I had control of my usage. From detox I continued to further treatment and ended up in the Gavin halfway house in South Boston. Once I landed at the Gavin House I dove into the program of Alcoholics Anonyms and tried to better myself every day.

PZ: What has helped you maintain your Recovery?

DZ: My mother used to say all the time that "God is good" and I would laugh at her and not take her serious at all. After what I put myself through

and being alive today I truly can say that God is good! What has brought me to who and where I am today is many things. What has kept me going though is the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonyms. When I made it the Gavin House I got very active in this program and got a home group, which is a meeting that you like and want to contribute to (setting up chairs, making coffee, greeting people, going on commitments). I would attend meetings every day. I not only got a sponsor, but I actively worked with a sponsor, which means I would call him and we would read together out of the "Big Book" and I would go through the 12 steps with him. I started praying and meditating, something I never thought I would do. Most importantly I help other acholic and addicts. Today I sponsor people and I try to show them how good life can be. Because for me I used to think I would never be happy without a substance in my body. A statement I've come to find out is not true whatsoever. Like I said at the beginning of this interview I was brought up. I never actually grew up. Through this journey I've been on over the past 14 months I've grown more than I have my first 24 years of life. I continue to grow every day. One day at a time.

PZ: What advice would you give someone just beginning their steps towards recovery?

DZ: We all know Charlestown is a small town and everyone knows everyone. If you saw me at my worst, I'm sure you thought I was going to end up dying like I know a lot of people thought. The advice I can give is to not give up. Life is worth living. No matter how bad you are, believe me when I say it does get better. If I were to write 14 months ago where I think I'd be today in life I would have sold myself so short. If you're struggling and have that feeling of not caring if you live or die, please reach out. There are many people who can help, myself being one of them. Find a meeting to go to. I've come to learn that life is what you make of it. I made my life and anyone that was left in my lives miserable and I'd say unbearable. Today I choose to not live like that anymore. Believe me when I say it is possible!