

Ginaya's Interview with Sean Boyle

December 18, 2017

A Reason to Recover

GGM: Can you start by talking about your childhood?

SB: I grew up in a strict, old school, military catholic family -very loving and tight knit hardworking, the blue-collar kind. I have two brothers' and one sister. I knew I was different from a young age. I experienced sexual abuse at a young age and that turned me into being a victim into then volunteering to victimize myself. I was teased a lot when I was younger because I didn't fit into the typical "townie" mold. I would sing "Spice girls" while everyone else would play hockey.

GGM: How and when did your active addiction begin?

SB: I started drinking at age 12 with friends. I immediately found relief when being intoxicated. That quickly progressed into using prescription pills and sniffing coke.

GGM: How did your addiction progress from there?

SB: I was living a double life, being involved in the community, but then heavily partying behind the scenes. When I was 12 years old I started selling my body to men and I would use the money to buy more drugs. When I was 17 years old I experienced my first overdose. I took klonopin prescription pills and drank vodka and remember waking up in the hospital. My family then realized how serious of a problem I had. I always did my best to hide it from them, but now it was evident I needed help. I then started treatment because my school forced me to go to AA meetings for 90 days otherwise I'd be expelled. I didn't take it seriously, instead I compared myself to everyone else and thought I was in a better position than most. I couldn't identify with them due to my age difference and the fact that they had turned to putting needles in their arms and I hadn't, yet. I ended up graduating on-time from high school and then went to college. My double life continued as I still partied, however it didn't take long for me to get expelled from college because of drugs. In my freshman year, I realized I had a problem, and wanted help again. I stopped doing cocaine and pills and limited myself to only socially drinking. Up until I was 21, I was able to keep my life somewhat together. It wasn't until I met my ex-boyfriend, that I was reintroduced to the drug scene. I started sniffing percocet and then when I couldn't find any and I was "dopesick" I was offered a bag of heroin in which I sniffed and then moved on to shooting it. For a while I hid my heroin addiction, I enrolled in community college and had decent grades for the first year. After that drugs truly became my main focus. I failed out of school eventually and was fired from multiple jobs. My relationships especially with family were deteriorating. I was living a dishonest life that kept me isolated from friends and family. I avoided my friends who were trying to get me help. I ignored everyone who would point out my addiction.

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GGM: Can you describe your path towards recovery?

SB: With the help from the Charlestown Coalition, I began my path towards treatment by entering detox. It wasn't until the 7th detox that I finally surrendered my will and accepted the fact that I was an addict. At first, I only thought it was a physical addiction I needed to battle, but it became clear that it was also a mental obsession in which I needed continued treatment. I still had the mindset that I was invincible, but after overdosing numerous times, I knew I needed to change or else I would die. During Christmas in 2016 I felt hopeless and dead inside. I was embarrassed and ashamed of how my life was turning out. I thought I was better off dead than dealing with my addiction. However, when I was at my lowest, I decided to pray to God. In that moment, I felt relief. I knew everything was going to be OK. After that during a commitment meeting I remember hearing someone I looked up to in recovery sharing their own story about getting on their knees, surrendering their Will and praying to a Higher Power and putting in the work for their recovery. That is when I realized I really wanted to change and was going to do what it takes. I am grateful to say I have been clean and sober for a little over a year.

GGM: How have you helped maintain your sobriety?

SB: I have put in the work by reading the "Big Book", journaling, helping others who are struggling, and living and working the steps of prayer and meditation. One of the greatest influences on my sobriety is having a relationship with God. Being involved with a home group has been very important to my recovery as well. By living a spiritual life and being kind and loving to all, including myself I found a reason to recover, purpose.

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

SB: My advice would be to listen to other people's advice and to be open to suggestions. "Work the program". Find a higher power and have faith. Be willing to change. Remember, "Recovery isn't for people who want it or need it. It's for people who work for it."

