

Shannon's Interview with Erica Greene

August 1, 2019

"A Lot to Lose"



SL: Please describe your childhood?

EG: I would say that I had a dysfunctional childhood, but it was filled with a lot of love. My parents were very loving, but there was a lot of misguidance and confusion too. I had to grow up fast being the older sibling all while going through my parent's divorce. We moved between family members from house to house until something stable became available.

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

EG: I'm not exactly sure how or when my addiction began manifesting. But I do know, I used food as a child to make me feel better in

the same manner I used drugs when I was older. As a kid, I would have 8 cookies instead of the 2 I was given. When I tried anything mind altering, I craved it. Starting with cigarettes as early as 9 years old which I would steal from my father. Not too long after marijuana and alcohol became something of interest. I enjoyed how substances made me feel. I was never afraid to try something new to fit in with the "cool" crowd.

SL: How did your addiction progress from there?

EG: I was doing cocaine and smoking PCP by the age of 13. Shortly after, I started getting into trouble with the law. My first arrest was before the age of 15. I tried all sorts of pills and because OC's were so big during that time, I tried those too. By 17 I was strung out. Still managing to go to school, but immediately after graduating high school my life went downhill fast. In and out of jails and institutions and having very little care for anything at all, except using drugs. I was fully addicted and nothing else mattered.

SL: Can you describe your path towards recovery?

EG: I tried to get sober more times than I can count. In and out of treatment, going to AA/Na but never actually following any suggestions. I went to meetings, but I didn't follow the program. It was more social to me and it kept people off my back. I went to jail for an extended amount of time and still came home and used. I wanted to change but I didn't know how to stop. I had bouts of sobriety after that, and then I got pregnant and stayed sober for over a year.

Although I still didn't change and eventually picked up again. Losing her was the scariest thought I ever had and I finally did something about it. I went to a program in New Hampshire and I began taking the 12 steps. I finally started following the steps seriously.

SL: What has helped you maintain your sobriety?

EG: I believe my relationship with God has been the most important to me maintaining my sobriety. Brooklyn, my daughter, is a huge motivation to push through the bad days and I also attend AA meetings frequently. Working the steps and being surrounded by sober women has also been a major help. Today I realize I have a lot to lose and to pick up I would be choosing to throw away everything I have worked so hard for.

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

EG: I don't like to think that I'd be one to take advice from because I have and maybe will make mistakes in sobriety. However, I know that in order for me to get where I am, I had to fully surrender. I was not going to be able to do this alone and that I needed to accept God and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous as being the most important things in my life. It was very difficult as a mom to put something in front of my child, but in order for her to have me there as a healthy mother I needed to put staying sober as number one and so far it's worked!

