

# Shannon's Interview with Danielle Rogovich

February 1, 2019

*"This is all worth it"*



## **SL: Please describe your childhood?**

DR: I grew up in a dysfunctional home in Somerville, MA. Although, I had a very decent childhood, there was always booze (that I knew of) and drugs (I found out later) in my life. I grew up visiting my dad in jails and treatment facilities. I thought that was completely normal. My older brother was my father figure when my dad wasn't around. My mom went out a lot, and I was always at a family or friends house during the weekends; while my brother was at his dad's.

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

DR: At around 9 years old, I started acting out in school. My personality completely changed. My grades started slipping and I was always getting into trouble. Fighting. Always being suspended, or in the principal's office. My mom

had the school switch me into a different class, but that didn't help. I didn't know then, but my "isms" were charging through at full speed.

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

DR: At age 12, my parents got divorced; and that's around the time I started to experiment. I started with cigarettes even though I always told myself that I would never smoke.

At 13, I smoked my first joint and had my first beer. I hated alcohol. Hated everything about it. The way it changed people (my parents, mostly). I can remember where I was, who I was with, and how many I had, 3 beers, before I passed out. After that night, I started romanticizing the next one. It didn't happen right away with booze, but I started smoking pot regularly after that. Always saying that I wouldn't do anything else.

At 15, my friends and I found ecstasy and other pills. I knew I had a problem when I took klonopins before school one day and blacked out. I lost a whole day! It didn't even phase me, nor scare me. I found it funny.

My addiction escalated from there. At 16, I started doing the powders; but "I'll never use a needle", I'd say. At 17, almost 18, I was a full-fledged IV heroin addict.

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

DR: When I was 12, my dad started to attend AA meetings. I would go with him. I think he knew that I would need them one day, myself. At 16, I got my first 24-hour chip and continued to walk in and out of meetings until I was ready to fully surrender.

Institutions started early. I was 17 when I was Sec 12ed. At that time, they didn't have the

adolescent facilities they have now. I was placed in a state mental hospital for 28 days.

Treatment programs came shortly after I turned 18. Detoxes, holdings, halfway houses and Sec 35s. I'd go into detox ready to get and stay clean, but as soon as I would leave, something would change.

I've tried MAT programs, outpatient programs, and other mental institutions with no luck. I just wasn't ready. I thought I was a lost cause.

At 27, I was homeless, jobless, penniless, hopeless. I was on a path of self-destruction. I wanted to die. I wasn't afraid of death. I was just afraid to do it myself. I was okay with the thought of dying with a needle in my arm, in fact, I prayed for it every time I used.

The night I was supposed to die, something intervened. I was on a deadly cocktail of drugs and alcohol, waiting for my dealer with the last ingredient. A fight broke out and I was arrested and brought to jail.

I continued to get high in jail for a month or so, until a girl I used with overdosed and died in her jail cell. It's a long story, but shortly, I was found out to be with her and was tested. I went into solitary for 15 days and vowed to myself that I would change. I found my Higher Power, started reading the literature and going to meetings. After I was sentenced to 15 months, I did all the programs that were offered.

At 13 months clean, I was released, and I headed right to the Meridian House. I worked on my self-destructive behaviors and learned more about myself in 7 months, than I ever have in 27 years. That place changed my life. Saved my life!

**SL: What has helped you maintain your sobriety?**

DR: Further treatment. Sober housing. Meetings. Healthy relationships with other sober people. My sponsor and her incredible guidance, especially during the rough patches. Working at a detox helped when I was feeling like giving up. Seeing the faces, broken, beaten, hopeless; would bring me back to how I felt. I

never want to feel that way. Then, seeing them walk out 7-14 days later; color back, smiling, new sense of hope. Reminding me that this is all worth it.

My kids keep me grounded, now. I'm a busy mom with a 2-year-old and 11-year-old. I work and take care of the house. Sometimes it's hard to do things for myself, but I try to attend a meeting before work every day and I talk to at least one recovering person a day.

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

DR: I would tell them to give themselves a break. Stop beating yourself up over your past actions. Do better today. Learn to love yourself and to not go through this alone.

I always recommend further treatment. Don't subject yourself to trigger voluntarily. Surround yourself with people that have your best interests and life at heart. and, more importantly, no matter how you're feeling, there is someone out there that loves you!

