

# Shannon's Interview with William Melton

May 31, 2020

*One Day at A Time*



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

**WM:** My childhood was rough, I was adopted when I was 2 months old and I grew up with 4 sisters and two were addicts.

My home life was very "DYSfunctional" but my mom did her best to raise me, my mother had always stood by me. She always made sure we had clothes on our backs and food on the table.

The first time I went to jail, I was 12 years old.

I then was in a gang for years. I went to DYS at 12 for armed robbery and attempted murder in 1989.

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

**WM:** I was around drugs and alcohol all my life from an early age, since I can remember. I was 10 years old when I started smoking weed and drinking -even though I didn't even like it, I was just doing what everyone else was doing.

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

**WM:** At one point for about 5 years, I didn't do anything drugs/alcohol because I was in DYS although while in DYS I was getting into trouble constantly – mostly for fights. I was misinformed by the misinformed - misguided all my life.

When I got out, I got back into the hustle in the streets because that's all I knew. Crack-cocaine became my drug of choice for the past 20 years.

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

**WM:** I was in and out of jail and did my first bid in South Bay in 1995. I was selling drugs on the streets.

In 1997, I met my biological mother for the first time - she found out I was in jail and just showed up for a visit while I was there. She was there for me when I started my recovery process too.

I worked at the Woods Mullen Shelter doing intake and Emerson college as a line cook.

Then I went to LA with a girl and I was using while I was in LA - I was out there for 9 months and came back and was in and out of jail multiple times again and still using. In and out of recovery - being clean, living

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dirty. Finally, this time around I had so much time hanging over my head and nothing else I tried was working so I asked for drug court in 2018.

### **SL: What has helped you maintain your recovery?**

**WM:** I was put on Charlestown Drug court and multiple violations for positive urine screens and leaving programs. I was in the Meridian House for 6 months - which was huge progress for me considering it is a therapeutic community and all the other programs I was attempted in prior; I would always leave or mess up somehow around the 30-day mark, that was my pattern. Although, I also left Meridian House, I did learn a lot there and have applied the tools I learned there to my life now.

There were people who wanted to give up on me and didn't think I could do it. They thought I was incapable of change. Thankfully, Judge McCormack and some of the other drug court team members wanted to give me another chance.

### **SL: What advice would you give to someone in early recovery?**

**WM:** Take suggestions from people who are a living proof that recovery works. Don't give up no matter what obstacles are in your way, or even if people try to knock you down. One thing I've learned is that I don't have control over what other people do or what other people think of me, but I do have control over how I respond. I don't need to prove anything to anyone, I have to do this for myself and focus on my own recovery journey, one day at time.

