

Shannon Lundin's Interview with Jason Duncan on Recovery

SL: Tell me about your childhood

JD: I grew up in Charlestown and had a good family, an older brother, played sports.

It wasn't ideal growing up in Charlestown, I had a lot of fear in caring too much of what people thought of me.

SL: How did you start using?

JD: I had my first drink at the age of eight or nine. My family's babysitter would have parties when he was watching us and use to give us beers and get us drunk. I didn't realize how messed up I was without alcohol until I became aware of the relief it gave me. At the age of twelve I was smoking marijuana and drinking daily, by the age fourteen I was smoking angel dust, doing cocaine, at fifteen I was taking pills and at by sixteen I was doing heroin. When I shot up for the first time, the comfort and relief I got – no other drug came close. I went to my first detox at the age of seventeen and by then I had already been to DYS multiple times. I remember being seventeen and sitting in Cambridge Jail watching the Patriot's lose to the Green Bay Packers and at the time thought to myself "adult jail isn't that bad, I can do this." I liked not having any responsibilities.

SL: What are some of your most challenging experiences as a person struggling with substance?

JD: In 2001 over Labor Day weekend, I found my brother Michael dead from an overdose. That still wasn't enough for me to stop, more often than not, I used it as an excuse to get high. I believe some of my most challenging experiences was finding good, available, treatment. I have been in and out of many programs over the years and never treated the underlying causes, I was spiritually sick. The only thing that has ever worked for me and made me not want to kill myself, even clean and sober, is the 12 Steps and building a relationship with a higher power who I choose to call God.

SL: What changed between then and now?

JD: I reached a point where I needed to take a long hard look at the reality of my situation. I have two children,

Lily and Jameson, and I didn't want to be an inconsistent parent. I think that is one of the worst things to do to a child. I finally surrendered and learned that the internal consequences were more devastating than the external.

SL: Describe your experiences with AA and the 12 Steps.

JD: I have tried it all – various detoxes and programs, M.A.T., therapy and none of that worked for me. I had placed myself in a position beyond human aide. I finally went to a 12 Step treatment facility and had a spiritual experience through the 12 Steps. I walked through all the fear and pain and had the ability to be honest with self for once.

SL: Tell about your experiences with the Charlestown Drug Court

JD: Honestly, I don't know if I took drug court to get well or just to stay out of jail. I have been in and out of the court system my whole life and I had a strong dislike for Charlestown Court. I hated everyone that worked there, but it was because I was doing the wrong thing. Then I started to have some success in Drug Court and realized all these people were trying to help me and my respect for the staff and the Charlestown Court increased.

SL: Overall how are you doing now?

JD: I am doing very well now, I am living in New Hampshire in a sober living community. It's part of my aftercare following the 12 Step retreat I took part in. I now have the ability to be present, a good father to my children, a good boyfriend to my girlfriend Maureen, a good son to my parents, and a good friend. The only struggle I really have right now is gaining employment due to the wreckage of my past, but I have faith that God's plan for me will prevail as long as I do my part. I always thought I had faith and then realized - my faith doesn't predict my actions, but my actions predict how much faith I have.

