

VOICES OF RECOVERY

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1. Please describe your childhood:

MM: I grew up the oldest of 4 children in Salem Ma. My parents were in their teenage years when they had me. With that being said they were not ready to be parents. My father drank and had a tendency to be verbally and physically abusive. My mother was a stay at home mom for most of my life. I was never really good in school but I did enjoy playing sports. We did not have a lot of money but I was lucky to have a friend whose mother made sure I was able to play. Soccer was my game. I think I used sports as an outlet for what was happening in the home. I struggled socially as I had an inability to connect due to low self esteem and low self worth.

2. How and when did addiction/alcoholism begin manifesting; at what age?

MM: I believe my disease was manifesting before I picked up the substances. Being that my father drank and used drugs it was not hard for me to get my hands on a drink or a line. I did have fear of my father but when it came to trying drugs and alcohol there was no fear. I smoked my 1st use of cocaine at 11. I smoked my 1st cigarette at 10. I started drinking and smoking weed at around 12 and was drinking daily by my freshman year of highschool. By highschool I had already tried almost every drug from Cocaine, benzo's and acid.

3. How did your addiction progress from there?

MM: For me my addiction took off with the alcohol. I drank almost every day. The older I got the more I drank and eventually I was a blackout drinker. At 16 I tried Heroin. It wasn't until I left home at 17 and moved to Lawrence that my opiate addiction really took off. I started sniffing heroin and quickly became addicted. Eventually I became a full blown IV heroin user.

4. Can you describe your path towards recovery?

MM: My path toward recovery was slow. I had gone to 20-30 detoxes and never being able to sustain abstinence. I tried the geographical cure but everywhere I went there I was. I had very little understanding of my disease or even what that meant. Although I heard of a solution in the treatment facilities I passed through nothing stuck. It seemed impossible. I was a victim of sex trafficking and spent a year hiding from my abuser. I eventually got pregnant in my active addiction and in 2002 I had a child. After losing custody of him in 2003 I eventually went into my 1st residential treatment facility. I stayed clean for about 9 months. While in recovery I was introduced to a 12 step program. I eventually had a short relapse before I entered back into treatment on October 15th 2004. I have not found it necessary to use in 17 1/2 years.

5. What has helped you maintain your recovery?

MM: I have been able to maintain my recovery by attending Narcotics Anonymous. Although 12 step programs are wonderful there is a lot of healing that has taken place spiritually. I have been able to do step work with a sponsor and that has really allowed me to look deeper into myself. At the end of the day the drugs are just a symptom of my problem, My disease is spiritual in nature and I must heal the little girl inside on a daily basis. I continue to help others the way that I was helped and that reminds me that alone I can't but together we can.

6. What advice would you give to someone just beginning their steps towards recovery?

GD: If I could give any advice to someone it would be this..It won't be easy but it will be worth it. Don't leave before the miracle happens! And remember don't use no matter what!