

Ginaya's Interview with Maureen Coppinger

January 26, 2018

The Gift of Desperation

GGM: Can you start by talking about your childhood?

MC: My childhood was great. I grew up in Charlestown and came from two loving parents who didn't come from much but worked unbelievably hard to give me and my two sisters everything we needed. My Father went through his own struggles with alcoholism but I don't really remember too much about it, only that he worked hard so my mom could stay at home with me and my sisters, until she went back to school to get her nursing license. I was an alter server when I was a kid and went to Charlestown catholic elementary school. I do however always remember always feeling like something was wrong with me. Never feeling apart of. Always was in fear of what people thought about me. I can only describe it really as an emptiness inside of me. I was never satisfied.

GGM: How and when did your active addiction begin?

MC: I would say about 13. I remember having my first alcoholic drink with my friends down the navy yard. I went away with my family the next day and the whole time I was away I couldn't wait to go back home and drink again. It gave me a feeling that nothing could ever fill in my life. That emptiness vanished and the fear of what other people thought of me lifted. I chased that feeling for years afterwards.

GGM: How did your addiction progress from there?

MC: From there I started getting into drugs. Could care less about my future or goals. At first it was smoking weed and drinking. Then progressed to the benzos and OxyContin. I stole from everyone to keep my habit for OxyContin. About a year after high school my parents caught me stealing from them and sent me away to my first treatment center, which I ended up leaving there and trying heroin for the first time. I fell in love with heroin and cocaine. Until it didn't work anymore. It was an emptiness like no other. The one thing that made me feel ok wasn't working. I started going in and out of treatment. Was homeless, in and out of programs, was getting arrested, and was killing everyone who loved me. Every rock bottom that I hit had a trap door. Went to the lowest of lows. I couldn't recognize myself anymore. I never thought as I child that I would grow up and live the life I was. I was a good kid ya know? My parents instilled good morals and values in me. Probably that type of kid other parents wanted their kids to hang out with. I wanted to die but was too afraid to kill myself.

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GGM: Can you describe your path towards recovery?

MC: I was introduced into a twelve-step program by my dad. However, at the time I wasn't ready and clearly needed to hit more pain until I was fully ready to do whatever it took to break free from that bondage. I didn't want to get high anymore but I didn't want to put in work to stay sober. It's like I wanted someone to just give me what they had but it doesn't work like that. Until finally at the age of 24 I got arrested for my last time. I got put on Drug Court and had to wait for a program in MCI Framingham. I can't describe what happened to me in there other than the Grace of God. I've learned God doesn't make terms too hard for those who seek him, and I did. For the first time my obsession was lifted, my ideas, thoughts, and attitude had changed. For the first time I had the gift of desperation. It truly was a gift. I was so sick and tired settling for less and living the life I was. It was then I was willing to do whatever it took to live a sober life.

GGM: How have you helped maintain your sobriety?

MC: A twelve step program has helped me maintain my sobriety. It has placed my hand in God's hand. I cleaned up the past to the best of my ability. There are some wrongs I can never fully make right but I'm always willing to do whatever I can to help anyone who was in my position and show them the freedom I feel from following a few simple steps. I can only give God the credit for my sobriety. I didn't do any of this besides take some action. That is what is helping me maintain my sobriety. My relationship with God. Also, I have two beautiful children. Lily Jane who is 5 and Jameson Michael who is 2. They are the light of my life. They didn't ask to be brought in this world so I do anything I can to keep working this program so they never have to grow up in insanity.

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

MC: Listen to suggestions, ask for help, believe in something bigger than yourself! What worked for me might not work for someone else. However, whatever their process might entail always be willing to listen to others who are trying to help!

