

Shannon's Interview with Fabiana Silva

June 30, 2021

It will pass, I promise!



SL: Please describe your childhood?

FS: I was born in Portugal and I was an only child of a single mother. My grandmother played a huge role in my life because my father was not around. My grandmother was the first to come to America so when I first came to this country it was only supposed to be for a visit. While I was here, I got hit by a car and broke both my legs. In turn my mom came to be with me and we ended up staying permanently. I was in a half body cast but recovered from it just fine and I actually am grateful that it happened or I might not be living here today. I was oblivious as child but I do feel like I was a lonely kid which quickly caused some codependency issues for me. Because I had no brothers and sisters, I always latched on to my friendships to fill the void. I also believe that my mother did her best to make sure that I felt loved and in doing that she probably over compensated and pretty much let me get away with murder. Overall though I mostly remember being ok besides being insecure and needy at a very young age.

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

FS: The addiction started manifesting in an obvious way when I was in middle school and me and my friends would seek out any opportunity to get into the adults drinking cabinets. The first time I got drunk I fell off a bike and scraped up my whole leg and when I woke up the next morning, I couldn't wait to do it again! I was about 11 years old when that happened and by the time, I went to high school and I did not know how to have fun without a drink or a joint.

SL: How did your addiction progress from there?

FS: I got through high school binge drinking every weekend and experimental drugs but never thinking it would turn into a problem for me. I knew kids much worse than I was and I believed that I was smarter than that and girls like me don't wake up with needles in their arms, even though I smoked weed every day and ecstasy and booze all weekend. I thought I was good because I didn't put anything up my nose yet and most of my friends had by now. When I graduated my drinking became more frequent and the drugs were more plentiful and the day finally came when I wanted to sniff my first line of cocaine. I was 20 when that happened and by the time, I turned 21 I had begun shooting heroin and had already been to my first detox.

SL: Can you describe your path towards recovery?

FS: Unfortunately, my path to recovery didn't present itself until I lost everything. I literally was living out of a motel room by myself and selling drugs to do more drugs. I lost a 20-year relationship, and everything I owned was in that home and I drove away with nothing and totaled my car a few weeks later. Eventually I got

Shannon's Interview with Fabiana Silva

June 30, 2021

It will pass, I promise!

caught in a hotel selling drugs and had no one to bail me out and rescue me. My family (what was left of it) would not pay a \$2,000 bail unless I agreed to go to treatment and that didn't happen until 4 months of being in jail. I still wasn't fully convinced that I was going to stay in treatment but I wanted out bad enough. When I got to the Sheehan House in Tewksbury, I started to think of a way out but because I had nothing to go home to or anyone that would take me in, I decided to give this recovery thing a shot. A few weeks after arriving at treatment the whole world shut down due to a global pandemic and that's when the real work began. I started reading and exercising. Prayer and meditation. I attended as many zoom recovery meetings as possible and really participated in our groups in treatment. I started to take all the suggestions and opened my heart and mind. I was forced to really look at all my behaviors and everything that brought me to this point in time. The turning point was when I realized that I had to do this for myself. I had no one to save me anymore and no one was willing to clean up my mess. I know that if things hadn't happened the way they did I would not be here today. If my addiction did not get to the point that it eventually got to, I would still be in an unhealthy destructive relationship. I stayed in it for so long because I did not believe that I could be alone nor did I want to be. I got high with him for 80% of that relationship and neither of us were willing to be uncomfortable. If I hadn't eventually got caught in a hotel room, I would have either died from the obscene amounts of drugs I was doing or I would have killed someone by driving the way I had been driving. Car accidents were like a weekly occurrence for me towards the end of my running. Another blessing was COVID, as crazy as that sounds! If it weren't for lock down, I would have gotten a job as soon as I could and without a doubt would have relapsed. I know this because I have done it countless times in the past. There have been so many miracles and gifts of sobriety that I cannot simply just write them all but I know that when I completely

surrendered and gave it to God, He took the wheel and has given me the ride of my life.

SL: What has helped you maintain your recovery?

FS: I continue to take all the suggestions. I did everything differently this time. I had to distance myself from my friends whom I love dearly because they are still out there. I am in sober living, I have a sponsor, and I started working the steps. I joined The Phoenix which is a sober active community, and started doing CrossFit with them. That has been a huge tool in keeping me connected to healthy likeminded people and prove to myself that I can do anything when I work hard at it. I always reach out to another person in recovery when I am struggling with something or someone. I practice some form of meditation regularly and I am super mindful and aware of my feelings. I have learned to identify my triggers and how to cope with them. I am not perfect and I don't set unreasonable expectations for myself because I don't want to feel defeated if I fail at something. Mostly I just hold on to my seat because I don't want to lose everything, I've gained in the last 20 months.

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

FS: My biggest piece of advice would be to keep an open mind and take all the suggestions from the people who have been doing it before you. If your behaviors brought you to a bottom then change everything. Stay away from people places and things that are not healthy. These sayings are not just sayings, they are real and they only became sayings after countless others learned the hard way. Myself included. Most of all don't give up! And when you are having a bad day or moment just breathe because it will pass, I promise!