

VOICES OF RECOVERY

Alyssa Tobin



1. Please describe your childhood:

AT: I couldn't have asked for a better childhood. One of 6 kids to two very old school hardworking parents. My father was a laborer in local 223 and my mom ran a home daycare. My parents sacrificed to put all 6 kids through catholic school.

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

AT: I believe I had addiction/alcoholic before I ever picked up a substance. I used sarcasm as a defense mechanism. Always laughing and joking but so lonely on the inside. The kind of loneliness that crowds didn't cure. My first drink was at age 13. My experience is one of a rapid progression. Priorities began to shift. School and responsibilities took a back seat. I always wanted to be with Friends down the park. When I was 15, I had a summer job with BYCC cleaning up Boston Parks (Red Shirts). I got poison ivy one day and discovered Benadryl. I fell in love with being able to sedate myself. This led to more powerful substances. My addiction progressed.

3. How did your addiction progress from there?

AT: I Had no idea about recovery. I thought it was a moral issue and I could stop myself. I could admit my life was unmanageable but had no idea there was a way out. Not knowing that this is a cunning, baffling, powerful disease that if left untreated is progressive and fatal. I started losing friends to overdoses and drunk driving accidents. That is when it became abundantly clear that I had a problem.

4. Can you describe your path towards recovery?

AT: My path towards recovery started when I had that moment of Clarity. The fear of remaining the same outweighed the fear of change. God placed all the right people in my life at exactly the right moments and helped me to get honest first and foremost with myself. The drugs/alcohol were but a symptom of my disease. Once removed, I had to start healing. Steady work through a twelve step program was the catalyst for my sobriety. The obsession to drink has been lifted, Thank you, God. I have to keep it real simple and one day at a time.

5. What has helped you maintain your recovery?

AT: I still have a very healthy fear of going backwards so I keep it up front that I can not drink no matter what. The relationships I have today are incredible. My daughters have a sober mom and that is the biggest blessing. Being present and available and able to show up for life

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

AT: My advice to the newcomer; please let us know you're new, coming back and need help, you are not alone. Please find a group you're comfortable with and get active. Forgive yourself for the past to make room for the future. Keep honesty up front. Be kind to yourself. Please keep coming, we need you to get and stay sober so you can help another. That what this is all about.