

Shannon's Interview with Ronnie Doe

July 9th, 2019

In the hand of God

SL: Please describe your childhood?

RD: I was the middle of five children who were brought up by our mother in the Bunker Hill projects. Due to our father's alcoholism, my mother was forced to play the role of both parents while working as a waitress to support us. Up until forced busing, sports were the most important thing in my life.

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

RD: I had my first drink at the age of 14. Four beers up on the roof of the hallway I lived in. Around the age of 15 I started smoking marijuana. Falsely believing it was not a gateway drug I would smoke it for a couple of years until it was replaced by harder drugs.

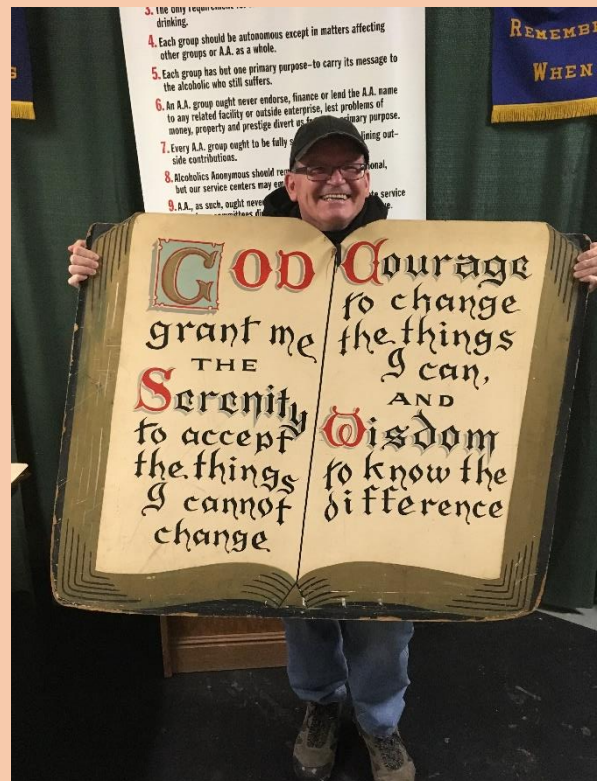
SL: How did your addiction progress from there?

RD: When my family moved to Lowell to escape forced busing my addiction rapidly increased. Left unattended on weekends in Charlestown, I would start smoking Angel Dust as well as taking stuff like mescaline. I would get involved in criminal activity as well and went to prison when I was 19. I was 24 when I got out and cocaine would soon become my lifelong drug of choice. I started out sniffing it and ended up being a crack addict for many years.

SL: Can you describe your path towards recovery?

RD: Since 1989 I have been sober about 20 out of 30 years. The first time I was 12 stepped by a couple of Recovering Townies. I would become a mini miracle and go from being a drug-crazed criminal to a law-abiding productive member of

society. I went to college and became a drug and alcohol counseling. Unfortunately, I would run into some old criminal friends and lapse into criminal activity while sober and ultimately this behavior led me to relapsing on drugs. After being in and out of recovery and prison for the next 11 years I would be asked to read a poem by Shannon Lundin at the annual Charlestown Candlelight Vigil. Because I was able to stay off cocaine I was minimizing my alcohol consumption. Being asked to read the poem made me feel as if it would be disrespectful to all those that died from this disease if I couldn't be sober when I was called to the podium. I was able to stay sober for a few weeks before the vigil and read the poem for the first time. After a brief lapse I was given an ultimatum by my then girlfriend and now my wife to get sober or get going. I was able to get sober on July 5th, 2014 and God willing will have 5 years when this goes to print.



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SL: What has helped you maintain your recovery?

RD: By following the people who were in AA before me I have been able to maintain my sobriety by remaining an active member in the Charlestown AA community. I continue to read my poem at the annual Charlestown Vigil and write new Recovery poems. I also give back to the community by assisting at the turkey giveaway by Harvest the Vine and Tom McDonald, delivering turkeys to the Charlestown elderly for Bob Sweeney, and occasionally playing Santa Claus. Also losing 4 relatives to this disease, it motivated me to stay clean a day at a time to let them know they didn't die in vain.

SL: What advice would you give to someone in early recovery?

RD: Being a strong advocate of Alcoholics Anonymous. I would advise them to follow the old AA way which is to participate in their recovery by joining a group, getting active and a job in that group and getting a sponsor that will take their hand and put it in the hand of God by taking them through the 12 steps of recovery

