

VOICES OF RECOVERY

George Dighton



1. Please describe your childhood:

GD: I had a wonderful childhood - I grew up in a single parent home in which my mom played both roles and taught me all the good values of life. I never saw her take a drink of alcohol. Growing up in Charlestown, I probably saw some things that most children wouldn't see, but I would not change it one bit.

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

GD: My addiction started at around the age of 14. When I was 13, there was a fire in my home, in which I lost a brother and sister, and my mom was burned over 90% of her body. She spent the next 1.5 years in the hospital, which turned my life upside down. I found relief in alcohol - I was a weekend warrior for a while, then was introduced to cocaine which became my best friend. In the beginning it was fun, until it wasn't.

3. How did your addiction progress from there?

GD: My addiction progressed all through my teen years, but I never considered it a problem. I met a girl, started having children and had five wonderful sons by the time I was 28. I accumulated all the things a kid from the projects could ever ask for - a house with a white picket fence and a great union job - but I also had an addiction and it progressed rapidly. In the end, the house was gone, the job was about to be lost, and I was about to be asked to leave by my wife.

4. Can you describe your path towards recovery?

GD: My path toward recovery happened after I moved back to Charlestown. I lost a 13 room house and a family member took us in. We were living in a one room apartment with seven of us - I still did not think I had a problem at that time. It was when I was given the ultimatum to do something or lose everything that I finally asked for help.

5. What has helped you maintain your recovery?

GD: I am one of the lucky ones. I have been sober since my 2nd AA meeting, which was 16 and a half years ago. What has helped maintain my sobriety is a loving and understanding family and AA. The people I have met in the fellowship have carried me when I couldn't carry myself. I was fortunate enough to have had a lot of old-time AA mentors who taught me how to go one day without a drink or drug and that is the only thing I have done right in sobriety. I ask my higher power to keep me away on a daily basis and I go to meetings - when I can't get to a meeting I call another sober person.

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

GD: The best advice I could give to a newcomer is to just be willing - put your hand out, get phone numbers, and use them. You have to be willing to change. Getting sober was the hardest thing I have ever had to do, but it was the best decision I have ever made. I probably shouldn't be here today but I am. I have an amazing life and I get to enjoy it because I just don't pick up.