

So this is my friend Don Nugent. I've known him for a year or so, since meeting him in a yoga class I taught at Lifetime. I liked him immediately. He's quiet and friendly and there's more to Don than meets the eye. I asked him a few questions and, well...here's Don:

Don started coming to Happy Hour Yoga last October, and his favorite classes here are Let Go and Reformer. He's been doing yoga for a year now, and he just started pilates two months ago. I love that he does both!! I asked why he thinks these classes are good for men, and he said because of the "women to men ratio." LOL...good answer Don! He says that yoga keeps him flexible which helps in everyday life, and he hears Pilates can help prevent injuries, and it's great for the abs. He added, "Yoga has made me a stronger person physically and mentally. It's helped me do things that I'm uncomfortable doing" (like this!).

Don's been a letter carrier for the USPS for twenty-one years, and if you ask him how long he'll be a postal carrier, he'll tell you...down to the minute. He has a cat named Ruddy.

Ten years ago, Don's life began to change for the worse. Sadly, in August of 2008, his mom died from a heart attack. Six months after his mom died; in February, Don's wife was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer. She lived for about fourteen months before she passed away. They had been married for thirteen years. She was a letter carrier in Hoffman Estates and she loved her animals and loved the outdoors. Soon after Denise died, Don's father was diagnosed with dementia and they moved him into a nursing home one year later. He passed away in September of 2012. It was a terrible four years he will never forget...although, he tried. He says he started drinking too much...to forget, to not feel, to not love again. He would drink until he passed out at night.

On January 6, 2016, Don quit. It's been just over two years since his last drink! To me, that is amazing!! I know there are many people who struggle with this same thing, and I think Don's story is very inspiring! I asked him if he had any advice for people trying to quit. He said he knew it was time to quit when alcohol started controlling his life. He recommends asking for help. He started to see a psychologist and he couldn't have stopped without her. She still helps him now. He learned that life still goes on, even without alcohol. It gets a little easier, although there are still many days that he would love to have a beer. Quitting has changed his whole life; "Life is not the same without drinking." He goes to the gym more and loves not having hangovers. He likes fishing, boating, taking pictures and running. He likes to watch "Gold Rush" and "Wicked Tuna"...two favorites in my house as well. He said he used to watch a lot of sports, but since he quit drinking "not so much." I personally am very happy he chose to come to Happy Hour for yoga and pilates!!

I just love Don's story, and I'm hoping that this can help someone...even just one other person who may be at a stage in life where Don was two years ago. I'm really proud of you Don. You are an inspiration and I admire your strength. You make others feel that difficult things are possible...so keep it up and thank you so very much for stepping out of your comfort zone and sharing your story with us. I'm sure Denise and your parents are so proud of you and are with you all the way.