



Stories of recovery
from addiction:

*jail
saved
my life*

My story: Lies. Deceit. Drugs. Violence. Prison. Trust issues. Then I came here, met people from all walks of life and I learned that not everybody wants something from you. For the future? Just me and my weans!

I wanted to stop because I have three boys—that was my trigger. I realized I'd been wasting my life and I didn't want my boys to get all my 'excess baggage'. Seeing anger in my boys made me realise that my addiction had taken its toll on them. Also, it may sound strange, but getting into jail saved my life—it was a real wake up call.

I realised drugs had been consuming my whole life, for 25 years. I was sick of being in jail all the time. I was sick of the deep grief in my heart, feeling paranoid about everyone all the time, and going to bed at night with the same terrible dreams. I was sick of selling, getting slashed, stabbed, walking around with a bullet-proof vest and all that.

I never thought I'd ever be me, but then again, I'd never really tried. I always wanted to get clean, but I just hadn't set my heart on it. I usually started things and didn't finish them. But now I have in my mind that I will succeed. After 25 years of addiction, I knew that if I put in even 5% of the heart I put into getting full of drugs, I'd be all right. And I have managed to stay clean for 16 months. Today is my last day on the program, and I'm well chuffed. I don't feel smug about it, but I know I've done well. It's definitely not been an easy journey, but it has made me stronger. I never used to have any respect for myself so I knew I had to work on that before I could recover.

I've met a lot of good people here. Talking to other people and relating to their experience has helped me a lot—now I know I'm not the only one who has been through all this! In the past I was told that I was too deep, never sharing any emotion, so I am amazed to be sitting here telling my story. It has also helped me realise that there actually are good people in the world. I used to hate everyone in the planet, always thinking they were up to something, or wanted something from me. But now I know that there are good people who just want to help, or to listen, asking for nothing in return.

I used to always think fate was in someone else's hands but now I realise it's all down to me. All the options are overwhelming, but in a good way! I've done an IT course which will help with my employment prospects, and I got a gym pass to keep me going. I've also applied for an HND in Media Web Design. There's just so many things you can do.

I get up every morning and go with the flow. My strategy is: I want to be here for 20 more years for my boys. I try and make up for my mistakes with my younger boys. I have them on the weekends and we go camping and fishing, trying to get out and about. Or we just stay at home and watch TV, like any normal family, though I try and not have them come from being stuck in one house to being stuck in another. That's why I try and go out and about with them.

In the future I will have a job and still be off drugs. I can be confident saying that. And I will be there for my boys.

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You can read other stories
of recovery from addictions at
www.storiesofrecovery.org.uk

Thank you to the participants who were kind
enough to share their stories for the greater good.

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the project.



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