



Stories of recovery  
from addiction:

*no  
matter  
what*

**W**hen my daughter was about 15 she started experimenting with cannabis with a friend. She was at a private school and it was apparently kind of slick to do that then. She was very open and honest and told me that she had the occasional joint, so I tolerated it. I thought that this was better than me banning it outright. I didn't want to push her in the wrong direction, or for her to go off behind my back and take harder drugs. But I was running a pub at the time and she started seeing a boy who worked in the bar. He turned out to be hooked on Class A drugs. There was an incident when she called me, distressed. She was with this boy, in his apartment, and she was feeling and looking very ill. We got a Doctor, who told me she had a needle mark in her arm. I very naively thought this was a one-off, that she had made a mistake once, but behind my back she had got herself hooked on class A drugs.

This went on for some time. She was on and off drugs but she managed to get herself sorted, ditched the boyfriend and got a job for a couple of years. Then she eventually met a guy, got married and had a wee boy. He already had two sons and she took them on too. Unbeknown to me her husband had a history of drug use and when he lost his job he went into decline. He started using again and got my daughter re-involved in drugs. She was 22 now. I couldn't trust her ex-husband, as he is now, as he would construct all sorts of stories to cover up his drug use. He had post-conflict stress disorder and all sorts of psychological problems, having fought in the Falklands war. He was a compulsive liar and on heavy medication, which put a lot of stress on my daughter. The heroin use was still going on - smoking it though, not injecting. I tried to help him sort his life out, and helped him get a job. I hoped it would help her if I could help him, and it worked for a while. He got a job in a hotel, but both of their lives were chaotic in so many different ways at this time.

My daughter got herself into a drug service, a methadone programme, got herself clean, and eventually got away from the husband. This meant she was under less psychological stress, but she had always suffered from low self-esteem because of the trauma she suffered from living

with her step-dad when she was a child. She lapsed a couple of times. Social work intervened, saying that the kids were under extreme emotional risk. The eldest boy had Aspergers Syndrome and ADHD. They removed the kids, and my daughter had to jump through all sorts of hoops and parenting courses. She has been free of heroin for two and a half years now and has reduced her methadone gradually. She is working but has to pay privately for a lawyer to try and get the kids back. She's thinking about trying a new drug aversion medication that her doctor is recommending. She is determined to stay off drugs.

Throughout all this I think my survival instincts have kicked in. I have tried to think outside the box. I meditate and use creative visualization, which I've taught myself. I did Aikido years ago, so perhaps the discipline of that has helped me to be a 'soul warrior', as its known in Aikido. I learned a lot of coping techniques from reading books. I've always taught my daughter to believe in herself, that she can tell me everything, rely on me, and I think she has done this. I grew up in a tough place and it taught me how to observe everything and everyone around me, so I've always used these skills to figure things out for myself.

I think my daughter is the prettiest and smartest young woman and she can do well for herself. She will always have my support, no matter what.

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You can read other stories  
of recovery from addictions at  
[www.storiesofrecovery.org.uk](http://www.storiesofrecovery.org.uk)

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

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