



Stories of recovery
from addiction:

*real
friends*

My recovery began when I admitted that I had a problem. I'd been using drugs recreationally for years but somehow compulsive daily use had crept up on me, and my life had been taken over by the downward spiral of continuous drug use. I had literally become insane, tortured by guilt at what I had done to the people I loved, but at the same time I still wanted to use more. My brain told me I couldn't stop and I'd reached a stage where fear dominated my whole life.

Then I was given an option: two years in prison or a drug treatment order. I went for the treatment and my life has changed for the better ever since. I arrived at a treatment centre beaten, broken, confused and desperate. I'd lost everything: my parents had died, my wife didn't want to know me and I couldn't be a responsible father. I had lost the will to live. I went through a hard time in my early recovery, detoxing and getting honest about my past. I could see for the first time in my life what I had really done and crucially I learned why I was doing it.

I found out that I was an addict but more importantly what an addict really was - a person who has no control over their own thinking. I was obsessed by thinking about drugs: it dominated my life and I had to adhere to its every

call. I had to have my own way, and became so self-centred that I thought of no one but myself. I had thought that drugs were my best friends but I came to accept that in reality they were my worst enemy, as they had robbed me of everything I had: my friends, family, jobs, self-worth, respect and my dignity. I found out that I couldn't take drugs in any shape or form, including drink.

Total abstinence was the only way forward for me. I also had to stop all association with my so-called mates, other drug users. In those early days of my recovery, I remember the huge help given to me by my drug worker, talking and listening to me. Just knowing he was there was a great help. It was during our counselling time together that I learned to listen, probably for the first time in my life!

My recovery was based on staying clean and I did this one day at a time. I would even break my day down into segments of my choosing, e.g. 5 minutes, or 1 hour. If I could just get through that day I would be OK. The days grew into weeks and the weeks into months. I embarked on a twelve step programme through Narcotics and Alcoholics Anonymous. This in turn gave me the tools to change my attitudes, my behaviour, and to mend my past. I had to work at a lifestyle change, a new life built on a solid foundation, where you didn't need to rely on anyone

or anything else to get by. I got into vegetarianism and wholefoods. This gave me a new buzz, trying out new foods and meeting brilliant new people, people who seemed high on life, not drugs.

Some years later now, by working on my programme a day at a time, I have everything back in my life. I have reconciled relations with all my family. I have wonderful friends who I can turn to at any time, I love my kids and they love me, I run a car and have two jobs. This is all achieved and maintained by living just for today, making the right choices for me in that day. I'm making my way and so can anyone else.

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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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