

Life of an Addict

I am writing this story to share my experience and show that there is more to life than drugs and partying. Now growing up I didn't have a bad childhood. Besides my parents being split up there was nothing else wrong with it. I got everything I wanted and my family loved me to death. Growing up I always wanted to fit in with the popular group of my classmates. I always believed that being the cool one or the funny one would be able to get me in to that group. As I got older all my friends started to drink and everyone thought it was the coolest thing to do. So in order to fit in I would drink here and there. Well when I got to be about 14 marijuana was introduced to me. Everyone was talking about how it was only fun and nothing bad would come out of it. Now I didn't have a bad childhood or anything that would really make want to use drugs. All I wanted to do was to fit in to a "group".

As I started using I only looked at it as something fun to do and nothing bad would really happen to me. But slowly I started to see the change in me. I went from being a straight A student to barely even passing my classes. I started to get a lot lazier around the house and never really wanted to do much but go out and get high. But since I loved that feeling so much I didn't want to stop so I continued doing it. I was never able to use successfully but I was able to go without getting caught. As far as I saw it that was good enough for me.

My parents and teachers started to suspect that something was wrong with me that they didn't know about. Right before the summer of 2010 my parents were finally able to figure it out. My dad found burnt matches lined up in my room and he decided to call me about it. Now I could have lied and said I was smoking a cigarette, but I decided to tell the truth. For that entire summer I was getting drug tested at the beginning of every month. I thought that it would be a good idea to stop using so I stayed out of trouble.

I was able to put together a clean time of 3 months. But as soon as the drug testing stopped I continued to go back to what I was doing. I thought that my parents were done suspecting me of doing it after I passed all the drug tests. It didn't take me too long after that to screw up my senior year. I almost made it through the first semester by the time I got caught again. I got in to a fight at school which resulted in me getting drug tested by the school. During my suspension the drug test came back and it was positive, the consequences flowed in.

I was taken out of my regular school and placed in an alternative education program. I was not allowed to be with my fellow classmates or play my senior year of baseball which really disappointed me. My parents also decided that it would be a good idea to place me in Gateway which is a drug rehabilitation center. Now when I first walked in to that place I hated every second of having to go there. I came in with the intention that as soon as I got out of that place I was going to go right back to smoking marijuana and getting high. But if I was there I might as well open my ears and listen to what they have to say. There was nothing else that I could really do at the point. Honestly, I am glad that I paid attention during those meetings.

Through Gateway I was able to finally see everything bad about smoking marijuana and everything that it causes. I was placed in an intensive outpatient program where I attend three days a week for three hour sessions. I am in a room with kids my age

that are going through the same problem that I am, active addiction. While attending this program they also have one family night every week where parents can accompany their child to the meetings. They can help parents learn what to do in order to stop the addiction and to build a better relationship with their son or daughter. I know that sometimes family night might not go to well but in the end it does help to fix my relationship with my parents. It helps to show that they are supportive of me getting clean and that really helps me through the process.

While at Gateway we are required to attend one Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meeting a week. This is my favorite part about receiving help because you are in a room and get help from people just like you. You are able to hear stories of what other people have gone through while having this addiction. This really helps me because I am able to learn how bad it can get later on down the road if I continue on the path I am on. It might only start with being fun and only smoking marijuana but it progresses into harder drugs and becomes a way of life. The meetings are only one hour and are located all around the city of Pittsburgh.

At these meetings you are able to meet with people you are the same age as you and people you have put together multiple years clean. They encourage you to get a home group and a sponsor while attending these meetings. A sponsor is someone that you can call any hour of the day to talk about any problems that you have. With 86 days clean myself I was able to think about all the mistakes I made just because I wanted to get high. I was ruining my whole life even before it really started all over drugs. But by being clean I have been concentrating on my school work, have been more motivated to do things and have built a better relationship with my family.

Most parents believe that smoking marijuana isn't that big of a problem and it is just a phase. Well what I have learned through the past 3 months is that marijuana is only the beginning. Eventually the disease of addiction progresses and becomes a lot worse. It is a good idea to stop their problem before they have the chance to reach that rock bottom. Programs like NA and Gateway are made to help adolescents and adults fight their disease of active addiction.

With the help of Gateway and NA I have been able to accomplish a lot in only three months. I have been able to get out of alternative, stay clean for 86 days, get better grades and even get accepted into college. If I wouldn't have attended these programs I would have continued to think that marijuana was no big deal and not realized the harm that it was causing me. This is my success story and I hope that you can take something from it. The life of an addict is not a fun one and you need to stop it before it begins. As an addict you know that one is too many and a thousand never enough. So don't pick up that first drug.