

## Alcohol Recovery Stories

### **William Horton's Recovery Story**

I didn't get in trouble every time I drank, but every time I got in trouble, I was drinking.

It felt like I had a hole in my soul.

I had a hollowness in my heart.

I felt empty on the inside years before I ever took that first drink.

Those are some of the statements that I use to describe my drinking. It's been said that only an alcoholic can remember his first drink in vivid detail. That's true for me. I took my first drink when I was 14 years old. I was on the football team, and I got the chance to drink with the cool, older guys on the team. I'd always been outgoing, funny and engaging with other people. At the same time, I always felt, deep on the inside, that if people really knew me, they wouldn't like me. I felt empty. More than anything, I wanted to be a part of a group and to fit in. Looking back on it now, I can see that I was part of a lot groups, and that I did fit in. At the time, though, all I felt was empty and alone.

After I made the football team, instead of feeling joy and happiness, I felt they must have let me in for some reason other than my skill.... Then, after a game, the older guys went into the woods to party. Someone brought baby food jars full of cherry vodka. They passed the jars around and took sips. When my turn came, I drank the whole thing.

To this day, even after 32 years completely sober, I can remember the drink burning as it went down. It hit my stomach and I felt it explode. It rippled through my body and gave me the sensation, for the first time in my life, that I was normal.

I felt like I fit in. I felt good. I would chase that feeling for the next 15 self-destructive years.

It was not how long I drank, or how much, it was what it did to me.

This behaviour caused me to lose many things I loved including a military career and then an acting career. The thing I used to help me feel better and fit in was taking away the very things I wanted to do. The moment of truth came when I decided to stop drinking and could not, I tried treatment and the 12 step programs, and they helped but I could not quit. When I discovered some new tools it all made sense and I was not only able to stop drinking, I never had that need to escape. I became a new person, one who was comfortable in my own skin. I put addiction in the rear view mirror.

I then started a quest to help others, I became an addiction counsellor, then I finished a Psychology Doctorate, got licensed and spent 20 years trying to change how addictions are treated, and to give others the tools they need to leave the addiction, once and for all. It breaks my heart to see people struggle.

## **Recovery To Me**

It was hard to admit I had a problem with my drinking and look for help, I didn't want people knowing my problems. I also didn't want social work to get involved or take my kids. After another fight with my ex, social work got involved and asked if I had a problem. I said I didn't know but could drink too much at times but so did lots of people.

I was referred into the addictions team and had an assessment. I hadn't really thought about stopping or why I really drank so much, I just thought it helped with stuff when I wasn't really able to cope. I had choices about my recovery plan and what I wanted to do. I changed this almost every week, one minute drinking then stopping, until social work took the kids and I only had supervised contact. My physical health got worse and my mood was rubbish so I drank more, what was the point now in getting sober. It got so bad they hospitalised me and I was yellow, not able to go to the toilet or eat, I looked pregnant but it was fluid they said. My worker still visited, encouraging me and asking me not to give up. She kept in contact with my ex and the kids and I got home from hospital with a warning that if I continued I would die.

When I went home I needed more help not just with staying off drink but with my bathing, my finances, house work, but I didn't want to drink and kept off it. I was offered AA meetings but didn't feel strong enough to go. My worker continued to visit weekly encouraging me to stay off it and helped arrange for the kids to get back into my life, I was seeing my babies again. I'm 6 months sober, the kids visit twice a week. I have them stay over because I'm trusted. I still have to see the specialist, he said I need a transplant, but I have to, I need to, and now I want to be sober. That's my goal today.

## **Recovery Story**

My name is Kerry and I am an Alcoholic/Addict who has been sober for 3 years and completely clean for over 2 years now. I am happy to share part of my story of Recovery in the hope of encouraging others to follow me on their journey to recovery.

I took my first drink at the age of 15 and sampled my first drug at the age of 22 and now at the age of 26 I am no longer dependant on anything other than my prescribed medication to get me through the day.

I decided in November of 2012 that my life had become totally unmanageable and I was no longer in control of my emotions, thoughts, feelings or decisions, nor was I in control of my everyday life. I was drinking 4/5 nights of the week, using recreational drugs along with the alcohol and taking all sorts of painkillers on regular occasions throughout every single day of every week, every month, every year for the whole duration of my adult life, and it was starting to show on me as a person, to my family, friends, colleagues, but mainly it was having a terrible impact on my relationship with my 2 children who mean the absolute world to me.

I started going to "AA" to help me to completely remove alcohol from my life and it worked. However it served no purpose to my other more severe addictions. Then, after approximately six months of attending "AA" meetings 4/5 nights per week I decided that I wanted to face my demons and stop everything else, and what a shock I got when I went into "withdrawal". I was swallowing between 20/30 painkillers per day at this point and had begun sourcing this illegally

or stealing from family members, who I'm ashamed to say were being prescribed these by their G.P. for illnesses etc to help them either cope or treat their conditions. After visiting my G.P. and explaining my hopeless life and asking for advice on how I could sort myself out, she advised me that she would refer me on to the team at the Addiction Clinic, and within 2/3 weeks I received an appointment through the post much to my dismay due to how I was feeling within myself. I felt both desperate for help and also so, so ashamed of myself and the mess I was in both physically and mentally. It left me feeling very, very alone and lost in the world, I literally had nowhere to turn.

However, I kept my appointment and went to the Clinic as arranged where I was introduced to the Nurse assigned to me, Allison Baillie, and within 5/10 minutes of my breaking down and exploding into a shrivelling wreck was overwhelmed by the welcome and glimmer of hope Allison kindly enlightened me to. She was so understanding of my condition and listened to every word I said attentively, she then told me what options were available to me and she astonished me also with the level of support she portrayed throughout our meeting. I was introduced to what I now refer to as my "miracle cure", "Suboxone", and this has completely turned my life around in such a way that I no longer am dependant on any one thing to get through my day! Allison took the time and explained in great detail how this medication worked and made it clear what I could expect, and her encouragement and support gave me the courage I needed to (once and for all) sort my hopeless, unmanageable life out.

It's been now over 2 year for me and the freedom I feel on a daily basis is all I need to keep me going. I am extremely grateful to Allison and her colleagues who have been by my side through my journey, and I owe them so much for believing in me and trusting me to help me achieve my goals. The "Suboxone" is now the only drug/medication I administer daily; I can honestly say I wouldn't have been able to do this after nearly 30 years of abusing my body without it.

Thank you all so much.

You showed me kindness, encouragement, support but more importantly you showed me how to believe in myself again and my life is now so much better. As each day passes I myself get stronger and stronger.

An extremely grateful,

Kerry xxx

Moving forward, I am now able to forget the wreckage that is now my past and focus on the happiness that is my future.

### **My Recovery Brick**

My first step I made to recovery was admitting I had an alcohol problem. My sister passed away at the age of 39 which gave me the intuition to change my life for my own health and my family. The best thing I ever did was contact the Coathill Addiction Services. They were so supportive for me and my case worker Jen was really nice and so helpful. Everything was explained clear, I couldn't have asked for any better treatment. I am so glad I've done the detox, my life is changed

so fast. I am enjoying life now especially with my wee family. I have even started walking and doing the gym, life is looking a lot better and brighter.

I would like to say a massive thank you to all the detox team.