

Dissonance

The Truth About Drug Addiction and How it Affects One's Life

If there was only one profession/career that I could be, it would be a drug counselor. I think that would become my line of work because I've done every drug you can possibly think of. I've been strung out from the age of fourteen to twenty-one and am now working on my second year of sobriety. I've lost everything because of drugs and with the knowledge that I have gained, I want to use my life experience to help others. I now think that being a drug counselor is what I was put here to do.

When it all began, I was a sheltered kid who attended a private school. For crying out loud, I couldn't tell you what a joint was. I had never even seen a beer before, but when I was twelve, I had smoked my first joint. I wasn't pressured, and it wasn't the crowd of people I hung out with either. I was at my dad's house in Indiana, and I went through the house looking for it. I had seen him use it, and I knew he hid it. After about an hour of looking, I found it. I didn't know what it was. I thought it was dried up grass that smelled like a skunk. So, I used the machine I had seen him use and rolled it up and smoked it. After I was done, I felt really tired, disoriented, and sleepy. It almost felt like I was floating in the air. Needless to say, it was something I really liked and needed daily.

When I was fourteen years of age, I decided to move to Indiana. I was put in a public school instead of a private school to finish my education. During my freshman year, I was expelled for selling prescription drugs. I lost over a whole calendar year's worth of schooling, but I discovered cocaine for the first time. I was smoking at least four joints a day and doing about a half gram of coke a day. The way I was able to afford it was with my allowance. By that time I had found a different connection of getting it. I worked with a guy who would give me a pretty good deal. I was getting an eight ball (3½ grams) for seventy-five dollars.

When I was re-enrolled back into school a year later, I was able to find people to buy drugs. In school I was selling an eight ball a day for \$150, so I was able to make seventy-five dollars profit plus an eight ball to do for myself. When I had reached sixteen years of age, I had discovered what crank/crystal methamphetamine was. I didn't really like it all that much at first, but I had also started working in a restaurant, and there my taste for drugs accelerated. I had also picked up another coke dealer, a dealer who had more weight and better product. So along with a better dealer, my clientele got better and my tolerance got higher. I was selling a half ounce to an ounce and a quarter (14 grams – 35 grams) a day. I always ran around with no less than \$1600 in my back pocket, but I also learned how to cook crack (freebase cocaine) and got addicted to crack really bad. I got to where my crack/cocaine habit was \$750-\$850 daily. I snorted 7 grams in a half hour once.

I knew I was already too far gone to quit. If I didn't have any dope, I did pills (pain killers, downers, uppers). I'll put it to you this way; I've done every pill starting with Coricidin to Ecstasy (MDMA) to shooting up Oxycontin. That's not all I've done either. I've done MDMA, MDA, 2c-c2 (synthetic mescaline), acid, shrooms, peyote, PCP, and Fentanyl. You name it. I've done it. I've even shot up heroin. By the age of eighteen, I had already done every drug in the book. Soon after, I got very bad from the drugs and couldn't afford my habit. I started stealing and writing bad checks, forging other people's names to checks so I could get my fix. Soon after that, nothing was really doing anything for me, so I started smoking methamphetamine. I always told myself if I got to the point to where I could smoke a gram of crack/meth, roll over and go to sleep, there would be no point in doing it.

I got to that point. I could eat, sleep, and function on it, but couldn't function without it. I got bad enough on methamphetamine to where I was buying supplies to make it rather than buy it. I didn't spend as much money on it. I could buy a box of Sudafed, a couple bottles of iodine, lye, and red phosphorous and get three to four grams of meth. Those supplies only cost me about thirty-five dollars so I was saving a few hundred. I was so

strung out on dope/meth, my body weight got down to ninety-five pounds. My original body weight averaged between 155 to 163 pounds. I stayed on meth until I was tired of being sick and tired. I decided I wasn't going to live chasing that first hit anymore.

Overall, if you were to ask me if it was worth it all, I would truthfully answer, "Hell no!!" Don't get me wrong – I honestly love the buzz and the rush you get off the drugs I've done. I lost everything I once had, hitting rock bottom time and time again. I watched my own father bring me big black garbage bags. My own flesh and blood, my family, told me to throw my belongings in the bags and to get the f--- out of his house because I was no longer his son. Yes, that happened to me at the age of eighteen. I had no money, no gas, and nowhere to go. I lived out of my car for a couple days. If it wasn't for my sister helping me out, I would be living on the streets to this day.

When I was seventeen, I tried to commit suicide. I took over sixty over-the-counter sleep aids, twenty muscle relaxers, and eight prescription sleep aids. I was so far gone and strung out that I had hit rock bottom. If I hadn't made it to the hospital within a ten to fifteen minute time frame, my heart would have exploded in my chest. My heart rate was up to 176 to 183 beats per minute. I had lost everything. My whole family disowned me because of drugs.

I am twenty-three years old. I've had to start over five times. I'm a convicted felon because of a drug charge with an assault and battery charge with it. I'm not allowed to have a checking or bank account because of forging checks and writing bad ones. I can't even get a loan for a car or house because I messed up my credit. I'm almost \$20,000 in debt to hospitals because I went to every hospital faking a back injury so I could get pain pills. Was it worth it? Hell no! But these are the consequences I have to live with everyday of my life. Drugs aren't cool! They can ruin your life. I know because I've been there – they ruined mine. Hopefully, whoever reads this story will use it to help someone close to them. My name is Cody Edward Hunley and my second year of sobriety will be November 22, 2009. Until the day I die,

I will always be a drug addict. If you're reading this passage and you are hooked on drugs or on your way, quit doing dope. If you don't, you could wake up tomorrow and the dope could be controlling you. You are in control, drugs aren't – remember that! It's all in your head.

~ *Cody Hunley*

Life Is Like a Chess Game

Someone very close to me once said,
“Life is like a chess game.”

If you don't straighten up
And watch yourself

It could be game over
And you will never get things out of checkmate.

~ *Cody Hunley*

The Reality of War

I had a dream when I was a small kid in India. It is still very clear in my mind. In my dream, I saw people coming and killing others, and we were hiding wherever we could – behind doors and under tables. I had this dream for many days.

Years later, we went to Kuwait. When Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, we were there. That was when I first felt the shadow of my childhood dream.

When the Iraqi soldiers came to Kuwait, they tortured, looted, and killed people. I heard stories about the kinds of torture they did, like pulling out people's nails, taking out their eyes, and cutting their hands. People were running for their lives because of the fear of war.

None of us left our homes during this time. If we needed water, the men who were staying in our building would get together, and go outside as a group.

From the first days of the invasion, people stocked all kinds of dried and frozen food. We hid this food and water under our beds because the Iraqi soldiers took whatever they could find. At night we were afraid to turn on a light because we didn't want anyone to know where we were staying.

We could hear the sound of guns in the distance. One day we heard the gunfire very close to our building, along with the noise of people crying and running away.

We had no way of contacting our family and friends. The TVs and phones had been disconnected. Everybody was panicked in this situation. Day by day, we lost any hope for escape. We considered nothing to be more important than our lives.

Then we got some wonderful news. Our names were on the evacuation list. We packed some necessary items, includ-

ing food for our journey. We traveled by bus from Kuwait to Iraq. This trip was dangerous because there were land mines hidden everywhere.

Late that night we reached a tent in the middle of an Iraqi desert. We had a torch with us, and the only other light we could depend on was the light of the moon. The tent was smelly and dirty. We managed to clean it up a little and spent the rest of the dark and windy night inside. I worried why we had been brought there in the middle of the night.

To my surprise, in the morning, a water tank and some food appeared. We also met a number of families who had been in the desert for many days and were waiting for a flight. Some of these people told us stories about their risky travel by car and how they had become lost in the desert because the border was closed.

By the grace of God we got our flight to Amman that same day. When we arrived in Amman, we had good accommodations. A lot of people were waiting there for a flight home. The next day we boarded a plane to India. We finally landed at the Bombay airport. After one night in Bombay, we traveled home by train.

Because of this experience, we saw for ourselves how good God is, and how he had protected our lives. We had arrived home before the war got worse. Thanks to God!

~ Rose Mathew

Recreating Me

Once upon a time there was a young boy named Byrd. He grew up in a poverty house, along with drugs. All he saw was gang activity and fast money.

When Byrd was a little boy, around six years old, his dad left him behind with one brother and two sisters. This made it very hard for his mother. Eventually he decided to sell drugs and run the streets with bad company. He thought this would be the easy way out, so he dropped out of school.

Everything was going great. Byrd had two cars and a lot of money. Then one day he decided to go to a place he knew would bring him a lot more trouble. Byrd didn't care about the choices he was about to make, even though his heart told him not to do it.

Byrd ended up in a lot of trouble with the police. He sold drugs to an informant and got caught. He went to jail for not listening to himself. He got two months in the county jail. The whole time his mom had been telling him to get his life together. All he could do in jail was think. He thought about the decisions he had made and the ones he had yet to make.

Now Byrd is out of jail. He is going back to school. All he thinks about is why he made those types of choices in life. He is eager to get his life on the right page. He wants to start his own businesses and own his own properties. He has good friends around him now. They want him to make the best decisions in life. With their support, he will break free from his old habits.

~ Offorie L. Banks

Brother of the Struggle

I am a part of the struggle
I was born through pain.
I am a black man
in search of change.
A convicted felon
with a lack of skills,
realistically speaking
how else can I feed my seed
and pay my bills?
Education I believe
is my last hope
and if not,
I guess it's back
to slinging dope.
Or robbing
or whatever else it takes
to eat.
I really want change
and to better myself,
but my ultimate battle
that I am losing
is against myself.

~ Chris Ware

Painful Memories

I am from Mexico City. Along with my parents, I have 7 sisters, and 1 brother. We are a typical middle-class family, but my childhood wasn't a normal one. When I started middle school, I realized that my family had a lot of problems. All our problems were the result of economic issues.

My father used to work for the government in Mexico City. He was making enough money to support us, but then everything changed when he had an accident. One night he was taking my pregnant cousin to the hospital, because she was in labor. He was crossing the street when a drunk driver hit him. My father was thrown a few meters away, but he was alive. The ambulance came and took him to the hospital. His two legs were completely destroyed. He also had broken ribs and a broken arm.

My father spent six months in the hospital. That whole time I only saw him once in the window from far away because my sister and I were too little to get in the hospital. I never got the opportunity to give him a hug or tell him how much I missed him.

Finally, my father came home, but then everything changed. My father lost his job. The government gave him a pension, but it wasn't enough money to support our family, because there were so many of us. The problems at home got worse because we didn't have enough money for our daily needs, such as food and clothing. That's when my father started drinking, which only made our problems worse. He started fighting with my mom every single day, and sometimes he got violent. When he was drunk, we were so scared! We knew that he was going to hit us, so we tried to hide and we prayed, but nothing really worked. He always found us.

I tried to concentrate on my education. That was the easiest way to forget about my family problems. In school, I met my best friend Veronica. We spent all the years of middle school together. We both liked to play basketball and study. She helped

me a lot. Those years at the middle school were the most beautiful moments in my life. But when we went to high school, the two of us had to separate because we went to different schools.

I have tried to forget this part of my childhood, but these memories still hurt my heart and sometimes make me cry.

A few years later, some of my sisters moved to the U.S.A. My mother decided to get a divorce from my father, but he wouldn't agree. The only way for her to leave my father was to move to another country. She decided to move with my sisters to the United States. I told her that I wanted to move with her, and that I didn't want to live with my father any more. She finally said yes. So we all came to the U.S.A. in 1996. The worst part was that we had to leave three of my younger sisters behind.

I was 16 years old when I came to the United States. The move was difficult. Everything was so different in America: the culture, language, and the food. I missed my sisters, my father and my friends. I often felt lonely. I was so depressed that I cried for days. Then, one day, I started to see everything in a different way. I knew that I needed to get strong, so I would be able to help my little sister come to America. After four years my sister immigrated to America. We finally had our family together again, except for my father. He still lives in Mexico, but he has changed a lot. We see him every year.

Nothing has been easy for me. But I think that all the problems and troubles I had as a child have made me a stronger person today. Now I'm happily married with a wonderful husband. We have three beautiful kids.

~ Juana Rueda

Pain

Pain

Why won't you go away
I have asked nicely
So why do you stay

Pain

I feel you in my sleep
Doctor after doctor
Medicine isn't cheap

Pain

Must you be so bad every day
Surgeries and injections
I'm feeling pain in every way

Pain

Please let my family be
I'm their mother and wife
Don't drain the life out of me

~ *Laura Meiers*

Road to Recovery

All the while I thought I was brave
But a path to destruction is what I paved.

I hid my fear behind anger and violence
Painfully my true intellect was silenced.

I suffered not due to others, only myself
It had reached a level that was detrimental to my health.

My heart was weak, my body was worn
Emotionally I had been stretched and torn.

Finally, at my bottom I heard a voice
I can change your life but you must make a choice.

Turn your life over to me
I'll open your heart and set you free.

Thus began my road to recovery.

~ Kory Barthany