

Programs that can improve your life

Dorothy: My name is Dorothy. I was in the United States Army during the Vietnam era, from January 1975 to January of '78. After leaving the military in '78 I rejoined regular Army again and I was stationed in Darmstadt Germany. My MOS was 16 Hotel intelligence operator. So, I was 19 years old when I did enter into the service. I had not drank before and of course any young person getting out, thinking you're grown and I started drinking at that time.

I got married in the south and of course my husband at that time, he drank along with me so that didn't help my experience. I wasn't an alcoholic at that time. I wasn't drinking daily, but I was drinking on a regular basis. After I left my husband in Mississippi, went through a divorce, I wasn't working during that time. So, that's when I started drinking more, thinking about did I make the right decision and not working. I've quit my job, my government job I had, and I started just drinking more and more on a regular basis and at this time I had two young sons. I was living at my mom's house at that time, and somehow or another I went to take a shower or whatever and I ended up falling in the bathroom, and I hit my head. Finally I get the door open and you know my head is bleeding and of course, I didn't realize it was bleeding at that time, but that's nice okay. My children saw this, this has gotten out of hand. I'm getting the tremors, your little tremors.

When I went to the VA I went to the 30 day inpatient. I was hospitalized for 30 days. I did complete the program. This was back in 1992. I have been sober ever since so I do know it works. The program definitely works. When you first go in and you detox or whatever, they make you very aware of your 12 steps, and they make you aware that if you want the program to work it's up to you to make it work.

We did have group, whereas everybody in the class, a number of Veterans in the class, we would all discuss different topics as to what might have triggered us to become alcoholics. Did something happen in our life or if something happened while we were in the service and we would just be outspoken and just talk about it.

Right after I got out of my 30 day program I didn't work for a minute. I went through the Veteran's unemployment office and I went for an interview. Thank God I was able to get the job then. So, I really didn't have a big, hard time trying to adjust. I mean today I'm a very conscious person of timeliness. I've been on time to my job, it's just, and I've been there every day because even in the service, you know you just couldn't call in and say, "well, I'm not going to come in today." So, for me to come to work every day and to be the best I can be, that's just something that was instilled in us while we were in the service.

And, I also found about, which the Veteran's Affairs have been very helpful to me, the VRAP. This is for Veterans from 30-65 which you can continue your education and retraining. That's why I mention that now. I plan to go back to school in January in the winter. Women Veterans should not be afraid to go to the VA. Of course, there's majority of males there but you are a Veteran just like they are. So, it's therefore you exercise it, they have women's clinic. There is help out there, but you have to be the one to make that stop, and say, "look, I don't have to take this. I don't have to send my body through this. There's counselors just waiting for you. I would recommend VA



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counseling to anybody. That is why you went to service. You do have your benefits, take advantage of it. You don't have to be in this situation, trust me.



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