

Recovery and Reconnection

Ed: My name is Ed. I served in the Army, 82nd Airborne, and this from the years 1985 to 1988.

Jasmine: I'm Jasmine and Ed's my Dad.

Ed: I was in the Infantry in the military, and my job was jumping into airplanes and walking constantly. When I was in there I had a couple of tragedies happen to my family and my big sister passed away. Something happened. I just wasn't myself and, I messed around and I indulged in some things that wasn't good as being a Soldier so they told me, I couldn't reenlist. Once I got out the military, my substance abuse history expanded, it was terrible. I didn't have any life. I would wreck families, I would get with one girl thinking we're going to have a life together, I would end up leaving.

Jasmine: He was in and out of my life. Every weekend me and my sister would be outside waiting on Dad, like, "When is Dad coming?" Sometimes he came, sometimes he didn't. Even though he was barely there we still looked forward to seeing him every weekend. Every time he comes he'd drop us off, we'd cry for, like, two days. I didn't really know about his drug addiction. My mom would put it in my ear, like, "Your dad is doing drugs." I'm like "No, he's not, he's my hero," and then it was true. He isolated himself from everybody, he would be quiet. I'd call him, leave him messages, he wouldn't answer. I didn't want to talk to him anymore for a while because of the drug abuse.

Ed: I was actually homeless, I was living in Arizona homeless, it was a million degrees, I had not contact with any of my family members. I was living on 32nd Street in Van Buren behind Circle K, and that was my entire existence. I just didn't want to be here. Some guy with a blue outreach jacket on, saw me. I had on some cut up BDU shorts and he asked me was I a Veteran, and this was like in 2008, and he took me to some place, it was a transition housing facility. They connected me with mental health providers, substance abuse counselors, and stuff like that and next thing you know, my life started to grow. I went to school for a little bit. I get back into the workforce. I started going to different meetings for substance abuse and stuff like that and I started making amends to these people and they started accepting me back. I would go to Chicago and apologize to all those family members that I let down.

Jasmine: He called me out of the blue one day. I was actually shocked to get a call from him, and he pretty much just apologized. He said it was the drugs and he just apologized. That is all I wanted was an apology, and so after the apology, we began to talk every day and then I just decided to come out here with him to Arizona.

Ed: Next thing you know, I got my life back. All those families and kids that I abandoned, they are now part of my life.

Jasmine: He's just more outgoing and friendly.

Ed: I pay their phone bills.



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Jasmine: Yeah, he's financially stable and he's just a different person, he brings so much positive energy in the whole room, and so I'm really proud of him, of how far he's come.

Ed: I'm in a program where my ninth step says I have to make amends to those who I have caused wrong—and my amends to my children is just the lifetime amends. I have to be there when they need me, and that's when I show up. When they call me I'm going to show up.

Jasmine: He does.

Ed: I want everyone to know that no matter what you're going through, maybe you have issues with substance abuse or being an addict or a mental health or PTSD, schizoaffective, all those things, don't let those labels dictate who you are. Go out and seek professional help. I do it on a regular basis and my life has become extraordinary.

Jasmine: The advice that I suggest is if you just work hard, maintain everything, stay positive it then you can overcome anything. We've overcome a lot. He's my best friend now.

Ed: I love you, baby girl.

Jasmine: I love you.



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