

Turning things around through VA support

Kenneth: My name is Kenneth. I was in the Navy. I did my first 30 days in Guatemala for training. I did like an around the horn tour all the way from Virginia to San Diego. I got home. I wasn't planning on being at home working at home at a steady job. I was planning on being in the Military.

I'd wash windows at gas stations walking around. I got a couple of bucks, gas money, or coffee, and I'd apply for work. I wasn't getting anywhere, my work applications seemed to be going into the circular file.

I had a difficult time resituating my program, hooking up with old connections. It seemed that every time it would wind up with a get together where we would start drinking and stuff. There's go out and have a few beers, and then there's go out and have a few beers and bring the beers home, and then forever having a few beers.

So, I went to the VA and I said, "Hey there is a block of ice that needs to be busted here." They really helped melt it down. I sat down and talked to them and told them about needing work. They put me through counseling and it really helped a lot, it made a big difference because I found other ways to express my feelings. They suggested I quit drinking altogether and find a different way of passing the time.

It's difficult when you're starting out. You want to quit drinking, ok great. Wake up in the morning you're not going to have a drink. By noon your buddy comes over and three 12-packs later you say, "Well I didn't have a drink till noon."

AA program is about the best thing that happened to me. Going to meetings instead of going to the bar really made a big difference. Working with others at the meeting really made a big difference. I got back to work earning a monthly income and paying my way. I got my habits back together. My health needs, laundry, read books, take care of personal issues, responsibility.

My advice for another Veteran would be go to meetings, work with others that are trying to improve. Don't let yourself get centered out of the ball game. Feel free to talk about it and find out what it is that has got you feeling low.



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