

## I got tired of fighting myself

**Daniel:** My name is Daniel I was in the United States Army and I was in there from 96 to 2000. I was in airborne infantry with the 82<sup>nd</sup> airborne. A pretty prestige, hard-core, badass job. Two years into the military I came home because a best friend had taken his own life. Six years later I buried my brother-in-law for the same thing through PTSD and mixing alcohol with his medication. That was like an eye opener for me because I was doing that same thing. I was taking meds that were being prescribed and I was mixing them with anything and everything I could get my hands on.

It kind of snowballed everything, it affected my wife, affected my marriage, affected my relationship with my children. I had gotten a DUI with my 8 month old child in the car, it lead to my wife kicking me out multiple times. I chose sleeping in a VA parking lot or on a VA park bench than sleeping at home in a bed with my wife and kids.

My two teenager sons were looking into changing their last name that is how much harm I had caused. I was building my hole deeper and digging it deeper and deeper.

I got tired of being, I got tired of fighting myself, I got tired of wondering why. I got tired of waking up sick to my stomach. I got tired of stealing from my kids. I got tired of stealing from my wife. I just did not know how the first step to take on how to stop drinking, to stop harming everybody else around me, stop harming the family. And I found an anger management program through the VA and there is where I met a doctor and he got me involved with the ABC program. Addictive Behaviors Clinic through the support of the VA and I put my whole self into it and it has just been a ...I started a whole different life this past two years. We went through kind of marital counseling where they brought her... where the doctor would bring her in and sit with us and I was able to kind of tell her really for the first time what was going on, why I was upset or angry or why I acted the way I did or said the things I did. I am very lucky that my wife has stayed behind me.

I want to give back to her now, for her carrying for me for all of those times, something I am excited to do now, to be a husband, to be a father. February 2 was my two year sober anniversary. My son wanted a picture with me, just me and him and the cake and he put it on all of his social media posts to show how proud he was of me. Now we have a 6-year-old who will never experience that side of his father. You know I get joy out of going to drop him off at kindergarten or small joys out of my son telling me something funny that happened at school today. When they come up to me and just put their arm around me for now reason and say "I love you dad" for no reason. It is just a total blessing to be a part of their lives now. I have gotten people coming to me and telling me that they were seeking their own help now because they saw that if I could do it then they definitely could do it.



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