

Shared stories helped David get past drug use

David: My name is David, I served in the United States Army, 31 Charlie Signal Battalion out of Fort Gordon, Georgia and I did a stint in the Gulf War. I joined the military because I was in a little trouble and I used the military as a way of getting away, hopefully to get some things straight with myself and I enjoyed it, the stay there, and the reality of it is, even after I got out of the military, the problems still exist.

When I got back home, I struggled with the disease of addiction for a while and I lost my marriage. Got a job, , but never treated my disease of addiction, and so the jobs never lasted. When you using alcohol and drugs, you don't always go to work consistently, you don't do the things that are necessarily "normal" mainstream of life, was just jumping around from job to job. I ended up homeless, I ended up sleeping on park benches, and continued drinking and the use of drugs, and my life was slowly spiraling down, but I kept telling myself I was okay and I really wasn't.

I was laying on a bench and it was summertime and it was nice out, and I remember something touching me that said, you gotta get up and you gotta do something different, this is no way to live. I went and I listened to other people who were in recovery, who had been in the same places and been in some of the same soup lines that I'd been in and I saw them standing up there, and I believe that was just God's way of saying this, "I'm gonna circle you with some people that's gonna really be genuine." Same day I got up off that bench and I went to this orientation at a place that was open for anybody who wanted to change their lives and the guy who was standing up sharing his story, had talked about how he stole money and how he couldn't go to his mother's house anymore and how he was living, and to stand up there and watch him and hear his story. I remember following him outside because I'm like, what's he gonna do? Go around the corner now and you know, have a drink or buy some drugs, but he became my Counselor.

This particular program itself was a clean and sober program, that if you were not committed to becoming clean and sober, then this was not the program for you, and it provided some structure, in your life, and that meaning they helped me with a place to live, so that automatically got me off of the street, and then I began the process to learn how to live without the use of alcohol and drugs. It took meetings, it took talking, it took about getting gut level honest about some things. It was intensive outpatient, it was group, a meetings as a group, three days a week, and then you met individual counseling, and how I did it was I just I had to surrender, and just had to trust the process. Those were the kinds of things that were said. David, trust the process, you have to surrender so, with that level, my trust level began to rise where I felt comfortable about getting these things out because I had to get them out in order to move forward.

The whole idea about using alcohol and drugs was just a way of like, covering those feelings up. I then started sharing with my Therapist, and my Therapist started helping me with some new tools to manage and function with that. And I did, and I continued on the process and believing. I started feeling better about myself, and I tell you, it's been coming up on 16 years now clean that, periodically, I rely back on my foundation and what got me to where I am. But there are times to that I still pick that phone up and I still call, maybe the same Therapist or the organization that helped me and say, listen, can I come in and sit in on a meeting? Can I come in and, and listen to someone else's story?



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Or can I come in and share my own story, hopefully it'll help somebody else. I did it, I know you can do it, just trust in yourself, learn to trust in someone else.



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