

Steps to Recovery

Phillip: My name is Phillip. I served with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7, NMCB 7, U.S. Navy from 95' to 2000.

Mike: And my name is Mike. I'm Phillip's sponsor and I'm also his pastor.

Phillip: In Honduras, I went down a mudslide, I almost suffocated. I thought I was gone, and luckily somebody grabbed my hand. I didn't know which way I was at, but somebody grabbed my hand and pulled me out.

Phillip: But when I get out, I couldn't, like these demons followed me around. Nightmares of the children that were killed kept revisiting me in my dreams. And then the obsession, compulsive thoughts over and over and over again as I imagined myself being in a tub of water. And my obsessive thoughts were down here, and they keep going up.

When's it going to happen, what is that. I can't believe this is happening and before you know I want to break out, I want relief, you know. So, I turned to drugs. I turned to alcohol. I turned to food. I turned to violence. But depression got a hold of me fast. I got myself in a dark hole.

For 10 years, my addiction and my mental health. I found myself homeless and in jail. Homeless charges, trespassing charges and the VA helped me out. They have a homeless clinic and I got help through them. But I still wasn't taking my recovery seriously. But I was, but also clean but I was on my way.

Phillip: I had already been in recovery for about 4 or 5 years already and I finally met this guy.

Mike: We met in a 12-step Recovery meeting in Mesa, Arizona and I happened to be doing volunteer work at the prison making a reconciliation event with the Gila River Indian Community.

Phillip: And I happened to be sharing in a meeting, I mentioned I'm from Gila River and he came up to me "Oh my God, you don't understand." "You're so important." And I was like "What?" He was like "I need to find this guy" And I know these people, I know a lot of people in Gila River. So, this is a big project, I'm thinking to myself, "Yes, I can do this for you."

Mike: And that created a huge purpose in both of our lives together as part of our recovery and it put us in touch with a whole group of people that was a support network.

Phillip: Being in recovery has brought me back to my tribe, allowed me to live outside my head. I'm not in my head as much. And that's the very important thing not isolating yourself.

Mike: He could call 20 people immediately and have 5 or 10 people be anywhere he needed them to be in an instant, as could I. That's what recovery support network does.



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We're all part of his community within the tribe and then it's reciprocated and there's no event that happens, for example at our church, that he isn't an integral part of. He has a huge purpose in our faith community, as well as his son.

Phillip: Having this fellowship of people, I have people like at the church, also in the recovery for 12-step Recovery people. I've made a lot of friends. Of course, also my Veteran friends.

Phillip: Being involved and not isolating myself and being in contact with people. I made good friends down there. They take good care of me, they love me. I'm in the network now, you see. Nobody is going to allow me to fall. I don't have to be alone no more.

Mike: We're here to say, if we can do it, you can do it.

Phillip: These 12-step programs, they understand you. They understand you. I mean they might not know maybe the exact same events that have gone on in your life, but they understand the depravity, the depression, the hole you get yourself into. They understand that and they understand you. Having somebody to understand you like that, it doesn't get better than that.

Mike: Ask for help. Don't try to do it on your own. Ask for help. And keep asking until you get it.



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