

I had a little bit of hope, and I ran with it

Jeff: My name is Jeff and I was in the Army from 2002 until 2014. I have been blown up a few times. Grenade blast, rockets, parachute jumps, mild concussions here and there that you just get blown off. You don't even bother going in to see the medics for it, but the next day you have a really pounding headache, like where did that come from.

Looking back, I think I was looking for a way out of all of the pain that led me to violate my morals and use meth. There was no guilt because you were numb. There was no more shame because I was numb. By February 2014 I'd been caught. My commander made it a point to let me know that I picked the wrong company commander to do drugs under. When I first got out of the military, got kicked out of the military I was homeless. I was living out of the back of my truck. There was a point in time when I was doing meth. I thought I would die. There was one point in time I actually did overdose. It wasn't intentional, but it happened. Probably one of the scariest moments of my life knowing full well okay these are all the signs and symptoms of an overdose, too embarrassed and too ashamed to go to the hospital and get treatment for it. It was kind of a perfect storm and I'm like "Okay, something has got to change."

Veteran's Trauma Court in Colorado basically made an exception for me based on my background, based on the original charges and they went ahead and accepted me in the program there. This program has helped change my life literally. You're going to be expected to go to counseling, you're going to be expected to go to anger management classes, you're going to be expected if you are order to take medication, you're going to be expected to take that medication. You are going to be held accountable for what you do and what you fail to do.

I walked in and saw my probation officer. He looked at me, he was like "Jeff you still have value." He was like I brought you into this section knowing you had problems, but at the same time knowing you had value. He gave me a chance and I was truly grateful for it. I said "Well I want to change. I don't want to keep living this life anymore. I want off the drugs, I don't want to go back, I want a better life with my family. I want to be able to get back in the medical field if possible." And he really made all that happen. I moved very quickly through all of the gates, because it was something I wanted to do. My life is so different from where thought I was gonna be. I went from homeless to looking at buying a house and re-establishing myself in the medical field.

Me and my son, my oldest son especially, we are a lot closer than we ever have been. We're able to talk about things nowadays. As hard and as trying as it was I am actually grateful that I went through it all, because it allowed me to come out not only as a better person, but as a better father.

Veteran's Trauma Court is actually real, it's legit. They really do want to help. If you actually utilize the resources that are there it is not going to be a painless process by any means but it can be a life changing process. It is possible. I didn't think it was, but I had a little bit of hope and I ran with it and that is all anybody needs.



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