



Stories of recovery
from addiction:

*football
crazy*

Owning up to, admitting and accepting I was an alcoholic - this gave me the foundations to become the person I am today. My first experience with drink was the day I was born: my father toasting me with his mates in his local, proudly declaring to the world, raise your glass lads I have a son....

I began heavy drinking at 20. Getting the buzz made me feel I was superman and could take the world on, fearless. I was involved in the football casual scene and under the influence I'd go head to head with anyone, in fact I remember a Man U game, when I was under the influence of that much alcohol I went into their end and as soon as I began to shout for my team I was set upon by a mob who kicked the living daylights out of me, only to end up in hospital – I bear the scars to this day - and on arriving back at the casual headquarters pub I was met with applause like I was some hero returning from a war zone. Now I look back and shudder with embarrassment and shame.

My drinking began to get out of control around some 12 years ago, when I was teaching martial arts. Though I never got to the point of having to rely on drink first thing in the morning, after work I would consume vast amounts

of alcohol, like there was no tomorrow. Some of the stuff I put my wife and kids through, I hang my head in shame and will try till the day I die to make amends. I once tried to grab the wheel from my wife's hands while she was driving and the kids were in the back. The hurt I caused even after 7 years sober is plain to see: my oldest daughter, now 16, has no feelings for me. We talk, yes, but she has little respect for me, and though this hurts I understand. I hope one day we will embrace and grow back into the loving relationship we once had. I don't blame her. Why should I: she's done nothing. Daddy was a drunk and all she wanted was the simple things in life - a hug, to go the park, and do all the things a father should do with his kids.

I've been recovering for 7 years, attending AA meetings. I never got involved in a programme. I set my stall out and knew what I had to do: take a long hard look at myself, stop feeling pity, stop being selfish, and take more responsibility. AA helped a lot, but I must give special mention to my wonderful wife, who stuck by me and supported me throughout my recovery and who continues to do so to this day. I don't know how she had the strength not to divorce me, or show me that unconditional love is something I had never had, so as I write this the tears well

up in my eyes: I love you and I am sorry for the hurt I caused you and the kids.

A.A. taught me to be honest, something I had difficulty with and struggled with for many years. Finding a group of people openly talking, admitting to others their wrongs and taking steps to make amends gave me the burning passion and desire to challenge my own dishonesty and move to a more peaceful, happier place within myself. I am not by any manner cured. I will have to recover for the rest of my days. I still have occasions when the old head comes back, not as strong as it was in the past, and I have my wife to turn to whenever I feel a trigger come on. This works wonders. She is my very own one-to-one worker when I need it most. I don't get as many triggers today as I first did, as I can now recognise them and have made the changes I needed to make. Football was a big trigger, as I was involved in the hooligan scene, and you all know what goes with that. Yes, drugs. Yes, the bevy, so I don't go to the games today. I don't even have as much interest in the game today as I did then.

Now what keeps me going is my desire, my passion, my spirit, my will, to remain alcohol free and be the person I always knew I was. Sharing my experience keeps me going - and having a great job in the addiction field, supporting others in their recovery journey.

*This is the story so humble and true
Piece it together and mend it with glue.*

JOHN WINSTON LENNON

*I must give special
mention to my
wonderful wife,
who stuck by me
and supported me
throughout my
recovery and who
continues to do so to
this day*

You can read other stories
of recovery from addictions at
www.storiesofrecovery.org.uk

Thank you to the participants who were kind
enough to share their stories for the greater good.

Thank you to Lapidus Scotland for supporting
the project.



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