

Stories of recovery
from addiction:

instinct



When my son was 23 he went away to work abroad. He was there for six months and when he came back, my instinct told me something was wrong. I didn't know that it was a drug problem at first. He had become very withdrawn and I just put it down to him being so quiet - he had always been quiet. Then I had an awful dream that he had stolen a car. When I told him about this he went as white as a sheet so I knew that something was wrong. It turned out that he and his pal had stolen a car!

I confronted him about drug addiction, but at first he denied it repeatedly. Then I found some heroin foils and confronted him head on with them, and he admitted that there had been a problem for a while. I tried all sorts of things to help.

It was an emotional roller coaster, constantly up then down, which continued for 10 years. He was always wanting money, telling me he was off the heroin, always making excuses. He was in denial about his problems. He changed his doctor and was then offered the option of going on the Methadone programme.

Things got to a crisis point for me. This was happening to my child, and there were other dramas going on round about me too. It was all just too much. I felt suicidal. What I recognise now, in hindsight, is the importance of support for families. That just wasn't there for me and my son at that time. However, I've always had a strong sense of another presence. You know a spiritual thing - not religious - definitely spiritual. What always helped me during life's traumas like my son's addiction have been meditation tapes, visualization tapes, these sorts of things. When I had 10 or 20 minutes to put them on, I could listen to someone else just telling me to relax. They have helped me to realise that even in the deepest black hole of a depression there would be a way to get through.

My son used to tell me that he was ok, and off the drugs. Then I'd find something, and know he was still using. We would have terrible fights, raging, bawling and shouting at each other. I've been through all the dramas of his addiction. We've pushed all of each other's buttons and made each other so angry in the past. Now if we start to have cross words he can dispel his anger really quickly, because he knows how much I love him. All I can really offer him is my love. You never stop loving your child, and I think he has grown a lot from my support.

I put up barriers to try and protect myself from the hurt - close off my heart - but the bottom line is I have never stopped loving him.

He was on Methadone for about four years and just recently he has managed to come off that too. I suppose I'm holding my breath really, to see if he can stay off. We've spoken about it. He has an addictive personality, but half the planet is addicted to something - gambling, money, drugs. I hope he will build up his willpower over a space of time. He is scared to get a job at the moment, in case having money in his pocket tempts him to go out and get more drugs. All I can do is stand back and let him get on with his own life and keep loving him. I want him to be inspired by something, something heart-felt that is not sparked by an addiction. I want to see him really waken up and find something to do that he enjoys. He's looking into a course in archaeology, and he loves wildlife programmes, so maybe there's some way he can develop these interests. Throughout all of the hard times we've been through he has always helped me so much, taking care of his younger brother and being there for me too. We both have a future.

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Thank you to the participants who were kind
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Thank you to Fass (Families affected by drug &
alcohol use), Snfad (Scottish network for families
affected by drugs) and Lapidus Scotland for
supporting the project.



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