

My journey of getting in trouble with the law began in 2006. First, let's start out with, I have always been a law abiding citizen and held a job ever since graduating high school in 1992. I worked at a big company doing Heating and air conditioning. I even started my own business doing HVAC. Around the year of 2004 I was introduced to crack cocaine. I became instantly addicted and my life changed forever. I spent my money on drugs instead of paying the bills. My actions caused me to get fired from my job and that's when I started my own business. Unfortunately all the money that I made went to feeding my addiction. Eventually I ran my business in the ground. I had no income with a big time drug addiction. I did try to get help, but all that was available to me was outpatient treatment (which was a joke). I caught my first burglary charge in 2006, and I cried for help with my drug addiction, but nothing was offered to me. I received 5 years probation and was put back out on the streets with a big time addiction. If I was offered serious help at this time I truly believe I wouldn't be where I am today. I ended up violating my probation on a theft charge and received a year in County jail. During that year of incarceration I sought help for my addiction and nothing was available to me. However I did make good use of my time during that year, I worked in the kitchen and eventually got put on work release. I kept busy during that year, but never received any help for the root of my problems, (Drug addiction).

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When my year was up I got released with more probation to walk off, and I did what any drug addict would do, went back to using. I did OK for awhile, then the drugs got the best of me (Again). In 2011 my addiction was way out of control, I did a string of burglaries in 4 different Counties and I am currently doing a 20 to 40 yr. sentence for those burglaries.

With the huge drug problem that we have in America today, more resources need to be made available to get people the proper treatment at a early stage.

Addiction IS a disease and is very powerful, for some just the "threat" of long-term incarceration, pressure from law enforcement, or spouses, to enter treatment, IS NOT enough. Even when one is incarcerated, there is no help on the inside for people with addiction (on the county level), and being mixed with other addicts, most of the talk is about getting out to get high or meeting "New" dealers for easier convenience on getting drugs. Without treatment it becomes a revolving door. Most of the time the addiction is much stronger than the will to go get treatment. I agree with "one breaking the law has to pay a penalty" but with addiction treatment "one breaking the law" will drop dramatically.

When I got arrested in Dec 2011 I went to Lebanon County prison. I again sought help for my addiction, and again there was nothing available to me. I soon learned that there was drugs available in the jail but I couldn't afford them, then I learned that if you went to the psych doctor and told him the right things, he would give you a handful of pills, some of which CAN give you a quick high if snorted.

So I did what any drug addict ⁽²⁾ would do, so I can keep getting high.

During my stay in county lockup awaiting my sentencing, I started doing some soul searching because I was getting tired of my lifestyle. I heard rumors of possible help that may be available to me upstate (State prison) My sentencing day finally came and I received my 20 to 40 yr sentence and now I thought my life is over, but deep down inside I wanted to change, But I needed help doing it. When my day came to go upstate (Feb 14 2013) I made a promise to myself, that I would never get high again and I would finally get the help that I needed.

When I arrived in Camp Hill, PA, I searched for programs and any help with my addiction, BUT once again nothing was available to me. I then decided to try going to church maybe that would help me. It ended up being a mask, but it worked for a little while. (Most importantly, I didn't use drugs during this time) ON 4/20/15 I was relocated to my "home" jail. (Somerset). Again I searched for programs and any kind of help I could get for my addiction, and once again there was nothing available. (That has now changed, since 2017 Somerset now offers N/A, A/A, Smart recovery.) I was so determined to kill my demons and never ever use again, I felt so alone on my road to recovery. I put myself to work. I started studying the Bible and received a associates degree in Biblical Studies. I wrote N/A services in California and asked for a N/A book. I started reading that and also found a sponsor who helped me with practicing the 12 steps. I am currently pursuing a Bachelors degree so I can eventually become a drug & Alcohol counselor. I worked on my sobriety by myself and my sponsor for about a year until other programs started to open up.

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Once I got my addiction under control and a better understanding of myself I set out to help other people.

I got A job in the education department helping others receive A Ged. I became A certified Peer support specialist where I demonstrate recovery wellness and provide outreach to individuals Using mental Health Services. I am also in the CPL (canine Partners for life) dog program. We train dogs to become service dogs to help people with disabilities. I continue to work hard on my sobriety and am happy to say, I have been drug free since Feb 14 2013. It took alot of hard work and dedication.

My addiction affected many people, and for that I'm very sorry. Sorry sometimes isnt enough, so the only way I can show it, is to be drug free, a much better person today, and give back as much as I can. I take full responsibility for my actions, even though my mind was clouded and overtaken by my disease. Many people say that I cant use drug addiction as an excuse, but without drugs, I wouldnt have committed the crimes that I did.

Treatment and resources need to be available either, besides jailtime, or at the county level. When one (as myself) seeks help and there is nothing available, one falls right back into the same ruts.

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Thanks for your time,

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(you may put my address on the website)

Thank you!