

The Story of Nick

(Participant comments upon his "Moving On" from Drug Court)

The first group that I attended was just over a year ago. I remember sitting there listening to things that you don't often hear in polite society. It was strange to me that a bunch of sober addicts were happy and joking especially since it was supposed to be some sort of counseling. I kept thinking that these people must be crazy. It was a comforting thought because I'm not so normal myself. It took me a while to be truly comfortable in drug court but right from the start I knew I belonged here with all the other crazy people.

Before I get too deep into my story I need to get the formalities out of the way. I want to thank all that have helped me in my yearlong adventure. I started to make a list then realized since this won't be televised or end up on Facebook it was pointless to add names that aren't here. So in short thank you to all from the David Lawrence Center and thank you to all that are in this court room. But I would like to recognize a few who in my opinion went above and beyond in the call of duty.

Ashley; I could make my entire speech on how much I appreciate all you have done for me and the others in drug court. But the one thing that I admire most about you is your ability to smile even after dealing with all life can throw at you and then having to deal with us. It may seem a small thing but I know your smile has helped me and I believe it's helped many others. So thank you.

Judge Martin; I don't know you near as well as Ashley but from my limited experience with other judges I can say with certainty that we are all lucky to have you as our judge. In a profession that too often seems heartless it's easy to see that you actually care and that has made a huge difference in my life. Thank you.

The bailiffs; You're here late because of us and I know it can't be easy to listen to all of our crap and always keep a straight face. So thank you for putting up with us.

There are others that need proper thanks such as my sponsor, my family, and many more but for brevity sake I will just say that I did not do this alone and without the help of so many others I would be in jail or dead.

Okay now that I have that out of the way it's time to talk about me. The story of Nick started many many years ago but I'm not telling that story. I'm telling the shorter and darker story of Nick. It's not a great story that will be told for generations to come. It's a rather boring and tragic tale that most of us in here have lived through. But the story is not done yet and I believe we can all get a happy ending.

It starts different for each of us but we are all here because of our addictions. And I am no different. In the beginning I was a functioning addict but it was always all about the drugs. I had kids and a wife and I loved my kids but the drugs always came first. It was a terrible way to live and I was a real bastard for many years.

When most people looked at me they would think I was someone who may have tried some weed in college but I probably didn't inhale. That image served me well for a long time but it was as far from the truth as you can get. With me hiding everything and my drug use getting worse it was just a matter of time before it all came crashing down.

In the end of the beginning when my addictions finally spiraled completely out of control I made it to detox then a rehab. I lost my wife which was the only good thing to happen at the time. And for about six months I was clean. However my life didn't really change. And when I started using again it took very little time to go way beyond where I was before.

The shorter and much worse second downfall was what led me here. After I started using again I lost my job, my friends, and just about everything else. My kids were still around but I had lost the part of myself that cared and all I had was the need for my next fix. I am not going to go into details because everyone here knows this part of the story all too well. Had to have the drugs, needed the drugs, did whatever it took to get the drugs. Then I got lucky and ended up in jail before I killed myself or someone else.

I spent my first month in jail fantasizing about getting out and heading to my dealer's house. The second month not quite as much and by the end of my third month I just wanted to get out to see my kids. I finally got out after five months and I was ready to walk the straight and narrow.

I really wanted help when I started this program. But it was not always easy to follow the path. I, like many of you, have had my doubts and to be honest still have them on occasion. In the beginning I would think often on how to beat the system. My mind would do terrible things and it took a lot of conscious effort to drag myself away from thoughts that would surely lead to my downfall. Over the course of the year it has gotten easier. Not always easy but easier. I wish I knew what to say to make it easier for everyone especially at the beginning. What I can say is for me AA was and is a great help. If you don't like AA go to a different meeting. Every meeting is different and every time of day is different. I tried quite a few in the beginning and I got lucky and found a place I really like. Of course that doesn't mean I always like to go to meetings but afterward I have never been sorry for going.

Both from David Lawrence and AA I have learned quite a bit this year. That's not to say I haven't heard a lot of it before. But I think this time I actually learned what a lot of it means. One of my most significant discoveries was that when you tell someone about your problems it helps. That seems so simple and rather stupid that just talking could help. But I have found it to be a truly cathartic experience to share with others. If you haven't tried it I highly recommend talking to someone be it a priest, your sponsor, a counselor, or even your barber. Just get it off your chest and the world seems a bit brighter.

I don't think I have changed much in the past year but everything about me has changed. I still have all my flaws and I can still be a real bastard. But now I can see that about myself and even stop myself before I do something that I will later regret. I am a lot more aware of myself and that seems to be key for me.

I know its cliché and we have heard it before but "one day at a time" is vital. I still plan things in advance but I make sure that for today I will not pick up or use.

Now my life is so much more than just trying to get my next fix. I have my kids full time, my family is thankful that I am around; we are even planning a trip to Disney for Christmas. I help at my Church and other parents trust me with their children. It's a great feeling to be useful and needed. And trust. Trust is something I thought would be lost to me forever. I believed no one would ever trust me again. Even now I sometimes feel unworthy. But it's a beautiful thing being trusted again. I can't say enough about what it feels like to have the trust of my family and friends once more.

I know I still have a long way to go and I can't say for sure what tomorrow will bring. I can say that for today I will be sober and if I can say that everyday I think I will be ok.

So the story of my life continues and the next chapter is filled with hope. And I am looking forward to my happy ending!