



# AN ADDICT: IN HIS OWN WORDS JUST TODAY

I WAS VERY SCARED THAT I COULD SOMEDAY DIE FROM DOING DRUGS, BUT AGAIN METH CONTROLLED MY THINKING SO ALL THE CONSEQUENCES DIDN'T SEEM TO MATTER.

John Brown was hurting. And scared. Ten years of addiction ended up with him looking in a mirror and not recognizing himself.

AFTER YEARS OF DOING (METH) I REALIZED IT HAS GOTTEN ME NOWHERE.

But then he did the unexpected. He got clean.

"It gets better," says John, a Lake Oswego native and former crystal meth user who just turned 32.

John is now 18 months into recovery from crystal meth use and abuse. During his using, John says he didn't accomplish much of anything. He dropped out of culinary school and had no real ambition to accomplish anything. He felt mentally and emotionally lost. And he was lonely.

YOU KNOW IT'S A FRIDAY AND SATURDAY THING AND I'M TELLING MYSELF I'M JUST GOING TO DO IT ON WEEKENDS. BUT WEEKENDS TURNED INTO WEEKDAYS. AND THEN EVERY DAY.

John acknowledges that he has done things he otherwise would not have, like participating in risky sexual activities, which has resulted with him contracting HIV. He also admitted to lying and stealing and even spent a day in jail when he was 25 years old. But since he was high, it didn't make a difference.

"I did not really learn a lesson," says John. "I did not care about the consequences and I was using again the next day."

But today is much different.

I THOUGHT BEING CLEAN WOULD BE SO BORING. BUT I HAVE SO MUCH FUN NOW

In John's recovery, he has come to terms with his past and is now happily enjoying life.

"I never thought being clean would be so much fun, and I'm so happy now. My friends and I actually do things."

John is also happy that he can be present with his family and participate in their lives. He has reconnected with friends he lost while he was using. He can actually say that he is proud of himself. He feels blessed that he is getting help with medication to help regulate the HIV virus in his system and John recognizes that staying clean is directly related to his overall health as well.

I AM LEARNING HOW TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS WITHOUT DRUGS, AND IT'S NOT EASY, BUT IT'S NICE TO BE ABLE TO FACE PROBLEMS.

John plans to enroll in Portland Community College's program for Drug and Alcohol Counseling and hopes to reach out to those who are using that want to make a change. He's currently taking prerequisites.

"If only one person can hear what I am saying, and is ready to be free of this kind of life, then I have done what I set out to do," he says about sharing his story.

...BEING CLEAN IS AMAZING. THE RELATIONSHIPS I HAVE MADE TODAY ARE AMAZING,

"The recovery community was the biggest thing that has helped me. There are a lot of different 12 step meetings and there are also ones for just gay people as well," John says.

Believe in yourself once again, John advises.

"Just give it a try. Just today. Just one day," John says.

I'm happy because today I am getting control of my life... meth controlled me for so many years.

I feel like I got a second chance on life, and I am going to make the most of it.

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