



June 2019 Newsletter

## My journey with my addicted granddaughter

My granddaughter has struggled for 7 years with substance abuse. This is including one previous stint in a rehab from which she was terminated, three detoxes and several visits to the county jail. She recently graduated from a yearlong rehab program and is now employed as an admissions assistant there and is soon to be promoted. With a history of always sabotaging her own success in the past, this was the first major thing she has ever completed in her 27 years of life. When I attended her graduation ceremony, she gave a 12 minute speech to a group of about 150-200 folks, which included other graduates, those about to graduate in a few months, newly admitted people, as well as family members, the CEO, and other board members. I recorded it on my phone and have watched it many times, because there are some things she said that grabbed my attention. I fully believe that the thoughts of an addict in recovery might be helpful to others who are trying to get their loved ones to seek recovery. It can also help parents understand why it isn't us who will get through to them. As Mike has said in his book and in his training videos, they need adult coping skills, but it won't be their parents that they look to for that. I've learned a tremendous amount about myself that could be learned no other way.

I have capitalized the phrases she used that really resonated with me. The thoughts she sparked in me are highlighted in red. This is quite lengthy, but I believe she confirms what PAL teaches us. My granddaughter did not go to rehab because of what I learned through PAL though. I chose to be a PAL facilitator because PAL teaches what God had already taught me over the course of a year sitting at His feet, allowing Him to expose my own issues. This only strengthened my determination to learn how to truly help my granddaughter. God had already shown me what to do. PAL explains why, and I'm better equipped to share with others.

Here are the excerpts from her speech:

- To the entire group she said: When I first came here, I was **BROKEN, BEATEN DOWN, and TIRED**. I've been broken and tired before, but this time it was different. I don't know how to explain what was different, but I'm sure many of you know what I'm talking about.
  - **They are not partying in addiction. They are hurting and exhausted, no matter how hateful they sound at times. Hurting people are hurtful. With tough love, we need to be sure we emphasize love while we're being tough.**

- To new people who just arrived to the program: This is going to be hard, really hard at times, but don't leave before your miracle happens. I PROMISE YOU IT IS WORTH IT. LIFE IS SO MUCH EASIER ON THIS SIDE.
  - They have to hear it from someone who has walked their path, someone who knows that it is worth the effort. They need a hope that only those in who have walked in their shoes can give.
- To her friend that came into the program when she did: YOU SHOWED ME HOW, by the way you kept going during one of your lowest times, when your brother had died, THAT I NEVER HAVE TO GO BACK, to the old way of dealing with my problems again.
  - When they're triggered, they learn positive ways to respond from others who also struggle.
- To her sponsor: I WANTED WHAT YOU HAD.
  - They need role models who are already winning the same battle they face.
- To her program mentor: YOU WERE THERE FOR ME when I was having meltdowns and was ready to give up.
  - They need others who have also struggled who can listen and talk them through their fears and anxiety, one breath at a time.
- I'm grateful to my probation officer for LOCKING ME UP. I would never have come here if he hadn't.
  - They need someone to care enough to stop them; because they reach a point at which they don't know how or don't believe they can stop themselves.
- I'm grateful to my grandma who loved me no matter what I did, sometimes a little too much. (Then she spoke directly to me) I was dragging you through this with me and one day you DECIDED TO CUT THE CORD. I'm glad I'M STILL HERE to say I love you, and to prove to you IT WAS WORTH IT.
  - All she needed from me was to let go.

I couldn't be her role model for success. I'm not an addict. I couldn't give her advice when she was triggered. I'm not an addict. I couldn't be an example of how to work through a crisis, such as the death of a family member without numbing her emotions. I'm not an addict. Everything she said, explained to me why it can't be us, the parents and grandparents, who help them kick their addiction.... we're not addicts. It is our job to be a role model of willingness to change - to get out of God's way and trust Him to put the right people in their path, while we let Him put us back in our own lane. In my prayers, I begged God to put some young Christian friends in her life to show her there's a better life to be lived, but HE knew it needed to be those who have walked the path she's on.

She's 17 months clean and sober now. She spoke all this wisdom and much more from her heart with no notes. She gives me insight for leading my PAL group, and I'm able to refer sons and daughters to her who need the same type of help she received at a no cost facility where they can work to pay their way.

At one point in her speech she said something that grabbed my once weary heart - "I never thought my life would turn out the way it has, but it did. What matters now, is what I do with the rest of it." For a moment, I saw my little brown eyed girl at about age 5 or 6, talking about all the things she wanted to be when she grew up. I realized no matter how ugly and devastating addiction is, the young woman I dreamed she would one day become has been in there all along, with hopes and dreams of her own...just like we all have. God can redeem any situation... there IS hope.