

Like many of my fellow alcoholics and addicts, I grew up in a dysfunctional home that included an alcoholic and physically abusive father. I also suffered sexual abuse at the hands of many for many years. When I found alcohol and drugs at the age of eight, I thought I had found the answer to my problems.

At first, the alcohol and the drugs took away the anxiety that resulted from being physical and sexually assaulted. One could say that for a short time they served a good purpose in my life. However, soon I found myself in a cycle that I could not stop. The alcohol and the drugs consumed my life. Fast forward eighteen years and I find myself sitting in a jail cell facing assault charges. All those years of abuse had made me into a very violent individual; add alcohol and drugs to that explosive personality and you have a recipe for destruction of self and others. It turns out that during a blackout, I had hurt someone. It was during my stay in jail that I was able to speak to a fellow addict who shared her story with me and gave me information on treatment. Upon my release, I attended treatment and after thirty days, I moved into a halfway house for alcoholics and drug addicts.

It was at the halfway house that I was encouraged to pursue my GED. After, I attended Community College and earned my EMT degree and subsequently my State license to practice at that capacity. Several years later I applied to The University of Nebraska at Omaha and was accepted. I decided to declare a Neuroscience major and began working towards it. Soon I realized how much work college really was. I found that I did not have much time to attend meetings as I had in the past. I asked around campus and was told there was one meeting in a small room at the counseling center. I attended on a pretty regular basis and enjoyed watching my fellow students come in and at first only be able to put together a couple of days, then weeks, and after a while even months. Lucky for us, the counseling center moved and we were given a bigger room to hold our meetings. The decision was made to increase the meetings to three per week. At first, meeting attendance was slow but soon grew in size.

The kids that had months were now celebrating one, two, and three years! Not only that, they were bringing in fellow students in to the rooms so they too could find help. It is true privilege to have been able to see this then and even more of a privilege to see that it still continues today.

For me, recovery on campus is very important. I am sure that without being able to attend meetings on campus my recovery would suffer. College life can be very stressful and alcohol and drugs are readily available for just about anyone that wants them. Myself and my fellow recovering alcoholics and drug addicts need a place on campus for us to feel safe and understood, a place that allows us to feel like we belong. The University has tried hard to give us that but in my opinion; it still falls short of having an adequate place for us.

In conclusion, I am happy to announce that in May, I celebrated eleven years of sobriety. Further, I am currently a senior in college. I will graduate with a bachelor's of science degree that will consist of major in Neuroscience and a minor in Gerontology this December. Without the support of the recovery community on campus I would not have been able to achieve any of this.