

Recovery Story

My sobriety began at the age of 17. Throughout my drinking career I had many experiences that would wake up any normal drinker and stop them in their tracks. The delusion of any alcoholic is to drink, act, and live like everyone else in the world. Unfortunately that is not something that I was able to do, even though I tried many times.

I had a brief stint of sobriety, just over 7 months, when I thought there was no way a girl of my age could know whether they were alcoholic or not. Typical reservation for a young person along with many others such as, I don't have the experience that others do, I didn't even drink legally...etc. Once I had decided I had more experience to gain, I joined my old life and started drinking again. I accumulated three nights of drinking in a month. In that time I suffered all the same internal pain that had left me during my stint of sobriety. It came flooding back, the dark anger, shaking fear, and paralyzing depression. I did not lose my parents, friends, material goods, or home. I lost me.

March 12, 2010, I went back to the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous with a new understanding of what it was going to take to stay sober. I could not have the reservations that someday I could drink like a lady or when I get older and wiser I will know better. I was going to have to take action and follow directions from others who had the experience and knowledge that I was lacking.

Today I have been sober for over 4 years. There has been one constant through this time, even when I wanted to fight it, I am still an alcoholic and will always be. It sounds daunting, like I'm stuck with some horrible life threatening disease. What it really means to me is that I have a quirk which affects me in many different ways but usually only if I am not taking actions to better my recovery and life.

A large piece of my sobriety is due to a Higher Power. I don't talk much about it because it's a scary topic for many. I believe in something stronger than me, it does not have a face or name and I will never fully understand what it is, all I do is keep learning and trusting. I also work the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous which I was taught by a fellow alcoholic who, I consider my sponsor. We talk all the time about life situations and what I can do different to better myself.

The process of recovery is not easy, it's really hard to look at myself and see the defects that come up in my daily affairs. I used alcohol and other substances to keep from feeling the pain of who I was being and the situations I was in throughout my life. I don't drink because of what happened, I drink because I like to drink, I like to party, I don't like to be sad, I want to waste time..... Pretty much any reason I could find; I would drink. I am an alcoholic because my body and mind react differently to alcohol. The only way to not drink is change the physical and mental but that requires the spiritual change.

Like I said easy is, and was not a part of my life...ever. Either I made my life hard with my actions and drinking, or life situations are happening and I have to make it a priority to stay plugged into my program. This looks like going to meetings, talking to other women, helping others, calling my sponsor, and gaining a closer relationship to my Higher Power. In theory these things would be small tasks that seem simple, but the process of doing these things can be much harder in practice. I have gone through some very hard trials. I have lost 6 friends to suicide and overdose and one friend who went missing when I was early in sobriety. I have also had to become a care-giver to my mom who had a brain infection in 2013. The result was a speech and communication disorder that impacts our lives greatly. The down side to all of this is that pain and grief consumes me at times. The upside is I have been able

to reach out and be a strong supporter to the friends and family in my life. I have the opportunity to work with other alcoholics and addicts who are on struggling and want to make changes to their lives.

Recovery is a hard thing for a young person, especially because drinking is a large part of the young adult lifestyle. I graduated High School while in treatment when I was 17 and started college. I had to withdraw and return home to Omaha. The first year back I tried to attend Iowa Western and live in the dorms. I was SO uncomfortable. It was difficult to be around so many people who were partying and having a good time. I stayed plugged in with people in the AA fellowship around town but school was not the safest place. From then until last year school was a place to take classes and that is all. I did not talk to many people on campus or in my classes, instead I just walked in right before each class started and left when it ended. This year I have been attending classes at UNO. At first I assumed my usual pattern, not really connecting with people or getting involved. I started going to a noon meeting every once in a while and talking to the people involved in recovery on campus. This has impacted the enjoyment of school for me greatly. I am now participating in the UNO Recovery Community. It is a new group that is growing quickly and trying to gather more support. I now am on campus almost all day. I sit in the recovery room and study, talk to other alcoholics, and get to help people when they have questions. It's really exciting to be involved in another community.

Recovery is a scary thing. I never would have expected to be in the place I am today with the various areas of life. I could talk for hours about the impact that recovery has had on my existence. Being able to incorporate recovery into school, work, and my home life has significantly helped me stay in a peaceful place.