



My name is Danielle Matlock. I started using substances when I was 12 years old. I continued to use them until I was 26 years old. I used every single day. I used to live and lived to use. In those years of using, a lot of things happened. I left home when I was 15 years old, not long after my mother died, because my father was done with dealing with my addiction. I had two children, having my oldest when I was 16 years old. I was in an abusive relationship for many years. I was raped a few times. I should have been dead a few times. I was stuck in the vicious cycle of drug addiction and I had no idea how to get out. It just didn't seem possible to quit. After a stint in recovery, I relapsed. I ultimately ended up in prison, still trying to figure out how to keep using. Even after I had lost custody of my children, looking at life in prison because I was a repeat offender, lost my family, and all self-respect....I was still trying to figure out how I could get high. Honestly, when I was released from prison, I had 6 months clean and I had been locked up for 2 years. I had to be done and completely surrender to the process of recovery in order for me to really quit. January 11, 2005, I woke up on a steel bunk in a jail on a hangover. I had just gotten a 4 year sentence INSTEAD of a life sentence and would be eligible for parole immediately. I prayed that day. "God help me. I have to stop doing this." Some things happened in that jail that day and people got put into my cell that were trying to do the right thing. I surrendered that day and I haven't used a mood or mind altering substance in the last 15 years.

I have accomplished a lot of things in my recovery. I went to college and graduated. I have had opportunities to tell my story publicly, hoping to stop the stigma of addiction. I received a pardon and my record has been expunged. I'm a substance abuse therapist. But, those things aren't as important to me as other things.

Today, my two children are in my life. They call me “Mom”they actually call me to ask my advice or to vent about their day. I have a beautiful granddaughter that never has to see me high. My father and stepmother are my next door neighbors. I married the best man on the planet. We are in recovery together and I have never had to be afraid that he would raise a hand to me. He respects me. I respect him. I respect myself. I have relationships with people that I assume would have nothing to do with me because of my past. They accept me for who I am and who I used to be. My relationship with God is one that I could never have imagined possible, especially considering all the years I rejected Him, doubted Him, resented Him, and even tried to refuse His existence. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that everyone, including God, was there all along. They were just waiting for me to surrender and come home. So, I went home. I found people in recovery that helped me learn how to live. I try to help people in recovery do the same. It’s a new cycle, today.



Resources:

<https://startyourrecovery.org/about-us>

https://www.crbhky.org/?page_id=12

<https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/recovery/recovery-resources-tools/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/rxawareness/pdf/Treatment-and-Recovery-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

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