

## Jane's Story "Drugs took me down but I am back to reclaim my life"

Posted by [glubin](#) July 26, 2009 12:32PM

**The following is a self disclosure by one of our student members (client) who is now part of a growing population of young well educated women in the suburbs from families with means and much support, who become drug addicts.**

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The disease of addiction is vicious, cunning, baffling, and disastrous to those in its path. I have learned that it doesn't discriminate. It doesn't matter what color you are, how old you are, what religion you practice, your gender, how much education you have, or what background you come from. It affects everyone equally

I can remember the day clearly that my life fell apart. It was a spring day, and people were out doing "normal" everyday things. I woke up to my normal routine: ate breakfast, went to work to teach suburban elementary school students. . I never thought that this would be day 1 of 3 years filled with misery.

After work I stopped by my friend's job as I often did. She was working for a doctor and she pretty much had free run of the office. As soon as I got there this day, she met me at the door and asked me to do her a huge favor, "just this once." She needed me to fill a prescription in my name. The prescription was for the painkiller oxycontin, which her insurance wouldn't cover. I really didn't see it as being that big of deal, so I did it. My thank you from my friend was giving me half the bottle, an equivalent of 30 pills.

The bottle sat in my pocketbook for about a week, until one night while out with my friends we decided to take them. **Once they kicked in, I fell in love instantly. I took them every single day for the next 10 months chasing the feeling that I got that first night.**

Let me show you who I was before drugs ruined my life. I was born from two loving parents, the youngest of three and the only girl. My parents made sure we wanted for nothing. My dad was a union boss, with his own business on the side, my mom was a stay at home mom.

Raised in a small upper-middle class town in Bergen County, I had a good childhood. My parents were loving and supportive and would have given me the world if they could. I had lots of friends, supportive ones at that. At the age of 15, I got drunk and smoked weed for the first time. I remember feeling really guilty the next night at the dinner table, sitting across from my parents replaying all the "don't do drugs" conversations they had given me over the years, but the guilty feeling went away with the hangover, and I was back out doing the same thing the following weekend. I was an A-B student, played soccer, and would cheerlead during the week, yet my weekends were spent getting drunk and stoned at whomever's house the party was at that night.

After high school, I spent the summer partying getting trashed before it was time for college. It was there in college, where I got my first taste of freedom. Living at college was great: late classes, no parents, and freedom. My usual weekend partying became more frequent and my weekends now started on Wednesday. Half way through my freshman year I tried coke for the first time, ecstasy came next, then percocet, valium, xanax, etc. The drugs replaced the drinking, and almost everyday was spent getting high.

Amazingly, I managed to do well in college and graduated with a degree in education as well as in psychology and now am 12 credits short of my masters.

After graduation, I returned home and for a while left my drug days behind me. I found a job teaching 5th graders in Bergen County, and met a great man to whom I became engaged. I was living what I thought was a perfect life until I picked up those oxycontin.

About 3 months into my addiction, my fiance (who never used before) began taking them with me. Soon the two of us went from a happy, loving, hard-working couple to two people who revolved their days around getting and taking pills. We would rummage through our family and friends medicine cabinets to find anything that would even slightly resemble the feeling that oxycontin gave us.

My friend's doctor cut her off, which meant my pills got cut off as well. From there things became worse. One day I woke up sick with flu like symptoms. My friend stopped by and informed me that it wasn't the flu. I was "kicking" from the opium that the oxycontin was composed of. All I could think about was finding a way to feel better. My girlfriend was already doing heroin, and she threw a bag down on the table and said "this will make it go away." Without even giving it a second thought, I sniffed it and within a few minutes all the aliments I was feeling were gone. I promised myself that day that I would never feel like that again, and spent the next 2 years doing just that, keeping myself from being sick.

In no time at all, my addiction had taken complete control over my life. I stopped going to work, and drained all my savings. I was existing solely to get high. I started selling my belongings and stealing from my family. **I was driving alone to the worst parts of Newark, NJ at all hours of the day and night to buy drugs.**

I called my wedding off 2 months before we were set to get married because in my distorted mind, I blamed him for all my problems and believed that if I ended things with him, I would wake up the next morning and no longer be a heroin addict, however, after that, I only fell deeper into my addiction.

I began shoplifting to support my habit, which lead me to being arrested a few times. My parents didn't understand what was happening, so I would lie to them, telling them that they had the wrong person, which they believed, so they would post my bail each time.

My first few times in front of the judge, I was given simple slaps on the wrist - usually a fine or probation. None of which deterred me from my lifestyle and I continued to use, acquiring a 20 bag a day habit.

My last arrest changed my life. I was arrested for robbery, a shoplifting charge that was upgraded after I became physically aggressive with the security guard. This time the prosecutor would not make any deals. She was tired of giving me breaks when all I would do is to go right back out and do the same thing.

Since it was a robbery charge which is a violent offense, it fell under NERA (No Early Release Act) which meant that I had to do 85% of my time. I was given 3 years in prison with a mandate to do 85% of this time incarcerated. In September of 2007, I was sent to the county jail to wait being sent to Edna Mahan Correctional Institution to begin serving my sentence.

I kicked (detoxified) in the county jail from the pills and the heroin. It was the worst experience of my life, and it took me almost 4 months to begin to feel like a "normal" person again.

In prison, I was classified and sent to the 'therapeutic community' program for my drug problem. In the beginning I was resistant, yet after a few weeks I really began to look at myself and the issues that festered within me. I realized that I had self-esteem, co-dependency, grief, and control issues, obsessive compulsive

disorder, and a list of other things that had been weighing me down. I slowly began the process of breaking down and being built back up. It was a long, painful, emotional process that I am still enduring today.

I am currently on community release at the Integrity House therapeutic community, where I continue to work on myself and grow daily. I've accepted that I will be an addict for the rest of my life, but I am ready for the fight. I want my life back!

I can now honestly say that I am grateful for being sent to prison and to Integrity House, because it has saved my life. I use to think that the disease of addiction was only suffered by the homeless and the poor. However as this story about my life states, it can happen to the 'privileged' as well. **The disease of addiction is vicious, cunning, baffling, and disastrous to those in its path. I have learned that it doesn't discriminate. It doesn't matter what color you are, how old you are, what religion you practice, your gender, how much education you have, or what background you come from. It affects everyone equally.**

I hope that my story can help another person make the choice not to use. If this happens, then all that I have gone through was not in vain.

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