



Weekly Highlight



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Please share the Recovery to Practice (RTP) Weekly Highlights with your colleagues, clients, friends, and family! If you are having trouble printing or viewing the RTP Weekly Highlight in its entirety, please refer to the attached PDF. To access the RTP Weekly Highlights and other RTP materials please visit:

<http://www.dsgonline.com/rtp/resources.html>

PERSONAL STORIES OF RECOVERY

To The Brink of Extinction

So this is the story of how I got here,
from the violence to sadness and silence to fear.
And then how it shifted and finally changed,
how life got re-centered and then re-arranged.

I know it all started in 1984,
and life was a trip all the way to age 4.
My grandma came and stole me away;
that was age 2 and a really bad day.
Finally Mom got half of my time,
the courts let my grandma get away with that crime.
I was so scared and felt so alone;
I just wanted somewhere that I could call home.

I was mistreated and life went downhill;
I got very silent, to where silence could kill.
At 7 years old, I drank and smoked pot;
it started out small but turned into a lot.
Life really sucked and only got worse;
sometimes I felt like my life was a curse.

I started getting beat for things I didn't do;
I'd fight, getting hurt, but I'd always lose.
I'd fight with my Mom and I'd fight with my Dad,
I fought to be good but I knew I was bad.
Mistreated and beaten, abused every day,
by people who weren't supposed to treat me this way.
By stepdads and stepmoms, friends and their lovers—
abused by their words, by their fists, and under covers.

Suddenly this demon came into my head
and told me I was evil, that I should be dead.
I listened and thought that his words were true,
that maybe just dying was what I should do.
With nowhere to turn, both cornered and scared,
I made up my mind that nobody cared.
I could just end it and stop all the pain:
I could end all the misery, the guilt, and the shame.
I came up with a plan that was shaky at best,
but hoped it could end me—and then I confessed.
I told my best friend and he told me to stay,
he told me that life wouldn't always be this way.
He helped me to find a sense of relief,
a moment away from all of my grief.
So I kept on fighting through thick and through thin,
trying to grasp that feeling again.

I drank very heavily, I drank till I shook,
I drank to hide, and I drank not to look.
To hide from my feelings and hide from my pain,
to hide from the fact I was going insane.
I beat up my dog and I beat up my friends,
but that isn't where this story ends.

There were people who loved me and cared nonetheless,
even though I was mean and usually a pest.
At 18 years old, I was sent to the PHF
on a 5150 and was told to take stuff.
A pill for this and a pill for that,
a pill for the reasons that I wore my hat.
Behind my hat hid the real me,
windows to the soul that you couldn't see.
They popped in the meds for my problems and woes,
for despair and anxiety—and then let me go.
I didn't like it; in fact I despised it,

and although they didn't want to, my friends realized it.

So suicide stayed at the top of my mind,
to all other things I must've seemed blind.
I heard this voice talking of things that weren't real,
that quickly led up to an inability to feel.
Soon I was cutting until I would bleed,
my blood, like a river, to fill up my need.
My life was a curse, I knew that was true,
that all other things were a lie—even you.
The voice that I heard, that I hid from the world,
told me to do things that would make your head twirl.
Although I was tired and my life was at stake,
I fought his demands by staying awake.
I did lots of drugs and stayed up for days;
I stayed up till I thought I was in a virtual maze.
A fictional character that this voice couldn't kill,
constantly moving, even when I was still.

Finally I reached the end of my rope,
when suddenly I realized it was around my throat.
And through all the letters and saying goodbye,
the thought of the end made my heart cry.
But one of my angels must have been listening,
'cause that day someone showed me a light that was glistening.
She took me by the hand and she led me to safety;
I could never repay her for the life that she gave me.
She showed me a life with freedom of choice,
and some time ago, I found my voice.
Then without warning my life took on meaning,
and I found my own reasons to keep going to meetings.
I worked very hard to get where I am,
and on most days I have a new plan.
The old one slips in for a while here and there,
when sometimes I think that no one would care.
But as time goes on and life seems to get better,
I wear my smile like a very warm sweater.

God gave me people to save me from self,
to keep me from killing or hurting myself.
I take medications as prescribed by the doc,
and it keeps me from crawling the walls when I talk.
They help me to fight this voice that persists;
even though he's still talking, I can resist.

My life's pretty stable, no longer insane,
and not very often do I feel much pain.
So I try to stay grateful and thank God each day,
for giving me a life I'd have no other way.

— *Anonymous (2007)*

WEB SITES CONTAINING PERSONAL STORIES OF RECOVERY

<http://www.takepart.com/lists/people-and-stories-mental-illness/53746>

http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=empower_ShareYourStory

<https://www.facingus.org>

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/reallives/page.cfm/share-story>

http://www.whatadifference.samhsa.gov/listen.asp?nav=nav03&content=3_0_listen

<http://www.mirecovery.org/Home/tabid/36/Default.aspx>

http://www.power2u.org/articles/recovery/recovery_stories/stories.html

<http://www.procovery.com/>

<http://www.promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov/publications/mystory/>

<http://www.storiesthatheal.samhsa.gov/index.asp>

Save the Date

The Recovery to Practice Resource Center is pleased to announce the second Webinar of its
2010 series,

"What Recovery Means for Acute Care."

It will take place September 16, 2010, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. EDT.

Register directly, at:

<https://www.livemeeting.com/lrs/8000963084/Registration.aspx?pageName=mlw22tf5gbcsrcqn>

The Recovery to Practice (RTP) Resource Center wants to hear from you, too!

We invite you to submit personal stories that describe recovery experiences.

To submit personal stories or other recovery resources,
please contact Stephanie Bernstein, M.S.W., at 1-877-584-8535 or email
RecoveryToPractice@dsgonline.com.

We welcome your views, comments, suggestions, and inquiries.

For more information on this topic or any other recovery topics, please contact
the Recovery to Practice Resource Center at
1-877-584-8535 or email RecoveryToPractice@dsgonline.com

*The views, opinions, and content of this Weekly Highlight are those of the authors and do not necessarily
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