

I am 28. I started experimenting with drugs on and off and as a young adolescent male in high school and it wasn't a problem at first but as I was already unsure of myself and how I fit into the world. I found drugs a great avenue to really change my mood and distract myself from the everyday struggle and adversity of life.

I decided after high school I was going to go to trade school. I had some experience with prescription opiates at this time and really felt all my anxiety about myself melt away when I took these drugs. The first time I took oxycontin I took a proper dose and I was thoroughly impressed how I could change my mood and feel great with these pain killer drugs. I went skateboarding and I felt so light footed and mentally sharp I did tricks I have never done before first try. I was hooked. I also got in a car accident at this time and really felt like I was in control of my bio-chemistry and felt empowered in a sense. Over the years I started to feel some withdrawels and my drug habbit got a lot worse. I was mixing stimulants and opiates and I was on welfare and avoiding my responsibilities. Life seemed way easier to just get high and have the illusion I was happy in my life. It was all artificial tho.

I really had worse and worse trouble coping and I was in denial. I was stealing , lying , cheating. I started smoking a lot of fentanyl and driving for a drug dealer to sustain my habit. I was falling asleep at the wheel and honestly could of easily killed someone. However this was just the beginning. Years more of treatment , finding a job and getting my life on track again. I really felt engulfed in my misery and the drugs temporary gave me relief. I ended up on east Hastings in and out of youth shelters , I started shooting heroin and god knows what into my arms. I would always be dope sick. This went on for years with serious efforts to

get clean with only failed attempts and near death experiences. I wanted to get better. I knew about Barka because of Wally trying to help me earlier and take me to meetings. I completely stopped calling him and forgot. I really didn't like AA and I did it on and off and I would refuse to do it. I knew I needed a support group so I started going to Barka and felt connected with the community and like minded individuals. I told another Polish friend about Barka when I went to the last recovery house I was at. I felt determined I was leaving the recovery house everyday all day to go to the gym and recovery meetings. I shared my story and I felt supported by Barka and I was showing up once a week. Somehow things have lined up for me and Barka was there for me. I never bought into the AA dogma but Barka didn't turn their back on me and I proved to myself I am capable and now I feel like I was asleep for 8 years and I have woken up and I feel alive and connected to something greater than myself. I am grateful and know when to put my ego aside. Keep failing because you never know what's around the corner.

Sorry this is the best I could do on short notice library closing soon. Feel free to add anything. I will add more later. thank you!!