

2008 COLLEGE SURVIVAL CONFERENCE

KAHUKU, O'AHU, HAWAII

HOW I DEFINE SUCCESS

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I spent nine of the hardest years of my life strung out as a crack cocaine addict. During that time I did things to myself and had things done to me that I would not wish upon any other human being. I put my life at risk on a daily basis. The drug I craved was the center of my world and I could not see any way out.

In the year 2000 I began my road to sobriety. It took me five trips to inpatient drug treatment facilities, one cross country move, and a six month jail sentence to finally get some clean time. The stay in jail was the thing that really opened my eyes. I believe that it was divine intervention. I had struggled so long and was close to ending my life. I believe that God stepped in and put me in a place where I would have no choice but to stay clean. That sentence also gave me a long time to think about what I really wanted out of life.

I was taken to jail on December 10, 2004. I have been free from drugs since that date. In the time since I was released from jail and given the chance to begin my life again I have embraced my life with both arms. I have been able to hold continuous employment and be a productive member of society. I have become an active member of my church. I have once again become an active member of my family.

Something that has become important to me is using my life to help others. I had started working toward a degree in chemical dependency counseling before I ever became an addict. I had rolled the idea of finishing my degree around in my head for the last two years, wondering if I had what it would take to go back to school seventeen years later. This summer I decided to go for it and signed up for classes. I had made some poor choices in my addiction and some of my credits would not transfer. I decided not to let that stop me; I wanted this dream too badly.

It is now the end of the first quarter and I am doing much better than I expected. I am successful in my family life, my spiritual life, my educational life, and I am working toward having a successful career. In my mind, success is not one dimensional. It is something we should strive for in all aspects of our lives. I have had a big battle in my life to win. I won it and I am successful.