

Personal Story 1

HOUSEWIFE, MOTHER, ADDICT

AS I SIT DOWN TO WRITE MY STORY, IT IS THE EVE OF MY FOURTH SOBRIETY birthday, and I can't help but reflect back on the person I was four years ago and all the miracles that have occurred in my life since.

Four years ago, I was a 41-year-old housewife and mother of four. I drove a minivan and lived in a nice middle-class neighborhood. I wasn't working because I had been fired from my three previous jobs for various incidents of "creative accounting." But, most important, I had been secretly addicted to crystal meth for twelve years.

I did my first line of meth at the age of 30 as casually as if it were alcohol. I briefly thought about the three years of my life I had thrown away freebasing in the early '80s. But this was different. I was just doing a line. Well, I was right: It was different. I fell in love with the effects of meth. I was able to work ten-hour days, keep my house spotless, keep my husband happy, be Supermom to my three little girls, and look good doing it. Within four years, I had lost my job of nine years, my house was a mess, my husband was not so happy, and my girls were starting to be an inconvenience. You see, they were getting older and requiring more of my time, which I just didn't have. With all the scheming, sneaking around, and covering up what I was doing, there wasn't time for things like parent-teacher conferences, field trips, ballet classes, cheerleading, etc. Oh, I kept signing up for everything, because appearances were critical to me.

I grew up never feeling good enough, popular enough, or smart enough. This was in no way due to my parents. They were very loving and supportive. I started to sabotage any chance for success early on with my pursuit of popularity. Although I didn't realize it at the time, I was very empty inside and always looking for happiness in other people, places, and things.

By the age of 38, I had been smoking meth for eight years. I was getting tired of the consequences, which just seemed to plague me. When I discovered I was pregnant again, I found the resolve to quit using. I felt I had dodged a bullet quite nicely. My kids didn't know. My parents didn't know, and most of my friends didn't know. The ones who did know were not fit to be my friends anymore. My husband knew a little, but he had chosen to save his sanity and stopped confronting me.

When I gave birth to my last child, a beautiful baby boy, I remember sitting in the hospital thinking about how long I should wait before I called my dealer. If I called too soon, even she might think I was a bad mother. I decided three days was sufficient and made that call. The next three years were nothing short of hell. I went from job to job. Stealing from my husband's business to pay for my drugs was an everyday event. I would then have to go to my parents for help to pay the electric bill, kids' doctor bills, etc. Each time, I'd use my husband's poor business management skills as the excuse for why we needed assistance. I dragged my little boy to the dealer's house many a time. I thought I was being a good mom by not taking him inside—I would leave him locked in his car seat with the air conditioning running. I stole from anyone who wasn't looking and felt justified doing so. The only thing I thought would make me a bad person was if my family discovered my secret. Well, that's exactly what happened.

When we celebrated my dad's 79th birthday I stole \$30 out of my brother-in-law's wallet. When my sister confronted me later, I did what was normal for me: I blamed someone else. This time, however, I stooped to a new low and blamed it on my 15-year-old daughter. Imagine my surprise when my sister didn't believe me. She knew. My husband had told her I was doing drugs and he thought I had a problem. She said that mom and dad knew—that they would pay for

drug treatment if I was willing to go. Well, I wasn't going to look bad to them, so I went.

I entered an eight-week outpatient program a few days later with the intention of getting clean, making everybody happy, and ultimately learning how to use moderately without suffering the consequences. I never thought it would be necessary—let alone possible—to stay clean forever. But a funny thing happened on the road to recovery. I discovered I had a problem, and I suspected the problem was me. I started to go to outside meetings because the program required that I go. At my first CMA meeting, I saw people who looked truly happy, and they said they had made the decision to quit using once and for all. Well, as an active addict, I was doomed; I couldn't make a healthy decision on my own if my life depended on it—which it did.

I kept going to meetings because I felt happy and hopeful while I was there. Working the Steps honestly and fearlessly with a sponsor allowed me to start feeling that way outside of meetings, too. I finally accepted that my ideas weren't working and that with God making the decisions, anything was possible.

These last four years have been an amazing, miraculous journey of self-discovery and acceptance. God now does for me what I could never do by myself. Today, I am a wife, a loving and active mother, a proud grandmother of three, a trusted employee, and most important, a humble servant and grateful member of Crystal Meth Anonymous.