

Story 3

I'm an alcoholic, I got into recovery in 2007 in prison because of drink and other substances related offending behaviour.

I was under the influence of alcohol from the age of 15. My first offence was a minor one when I was only 15 where I received a caution. I ended up in prison for the first time at 21 for a serious offence and I was given a 2-year sentence. Fast forward another 10 years of alcohol and other substance use and all sorts of offending behaviour leading to multiple arrests, and I was put in prison again at 29 years old where I got a 4 ½ year prison sentence. It was a significant prison sentence and as a result I had a huge wakeup call and, in all honesty, I'd been praying for it to end. This might seem an odd statement to make but I was drinking alcohol against my will and using other substances. Sitting there in my cell I started to realise that alcohol and the use of other substances were entirely responsible for my offending behaviour.

I did a drug and alcohol course in prison although it was challenging to take part in these programmes as there are limited spaces and you must fit certain criteria. In the program I was told just to try and regulate my drug and alcohol consumption I was at my wit's end as that was what I had been trying to do my whole life, and it hadn't worked. I was asking for help elsewhere when another prisoner informed me of the 12 step Alcoholics Anonymous recovery programme that was available. I had no real idea what was involved, and the concept of total abstinence was alien to me, but something was telling me to attend AA meetings every single day which I did because plan B was to drink again, and I knew where that would lead me.

I had to surrender and ask a sponsor to help me. A sponsor is just another alcoholic who has been through the 12 steps. I am very grateful to my sponsor as he takes time out of his day to help guide me along and because of working the 12 steps and attending regular AA meetings, I do not want to pick up a drink and as a result I have been afforded a wonderful life which I didn't imagine was possible before. I am living proof; my children and family are living proof that AA works. Now I am in a position where I can pass this onto fellow Alcoholics and show them how it worked for me and what life is like now.

I am grateful today for AA and all the people who do service.