



I'm Better Than That

By Marie Dobson

THE IMPACT OF DRUGS IS DEVASTATING. They affect anything and everything around them. Abusing drugs is like willingly jumping into quicksand. The more you mess around in it, the faster you sink. Many times people fail to realize how far they have sunk before the quicksand closes over their head.

Growing up we had the epitome of the "All-American" family. I was raised with four brothers and sisters in a very rural town in Wyoming. My mom ran the town daycare and my dad worked for the town as well. Around the age of twelve I was taken out of school along with my two other sisters by my mother. I remember her taking us home and explaining this would be the last time that we would see our family. She allowed each of us a backpack to take whatever we wanted that would fit, and the opportunity to write my family a good-bye note. While getting ready to leave, my oldest brother Gordon had skipped school not knowing what was going on and had come home. One of the hardest things I have ever had to do was look in the eyes of my oldest brother and see them filling with tears, something I had never witnessed. Because both of the boys were in legal trouble, they were not allowed to leave the state of Wyoming.

My mom then took us all the way to Washington. It was there that I learned the severity of the situation. Both of my

parents were highly addicted to crystal meth, and now that I look back, I'm amazed that I did not see any of the signs. I remember going weeks without seeing my parents and being taken care of by my sisters. Or going weeks without any food in the house, with no electricity or heat. Then after being so low for so long, we would wake up to the house completely rearranged and spotless. Both of my parents would be awake, my mom typically cooking, and my father working on various projects throughout the house. I looked forward to days like this, when the house was warm, and clean, and both of my parents were there. To me, that was normal.

My mom had the choice to either stay in Wyoming and end up dead, or take the three girls and leave. Her addiction to meth had brought her to the brink of suicide. I remember the times when I would go into my parent's room and find my mom locked in the closet with a gun. My mom would crawl out of the closet, and then carry on like nothing was wrong. My naiveté kept me unknowing to the family secret.

At the time, I was so angry at my mom for taking me from my family. It took me years to realize the amazingly selfless thing my mother did for us. Had we not left when we did, I guarantee my mother would not be here, and my future would definitely not be going where it is. The best thing either of my parents has ever done for me is remove me from my life in Dubois.

My sister Casianne decided she would rather be back in Wyoming, so she left Washington and went back. Unfortunately, that was probably one of the worst decisions she could have made. Back home in Wyoming, the drug situation with my family only intensified. My brothers were soon introduced to meth, and cocaine. It took them years to recover from the hold drugs had on them. Neither of them made it past their sophomore years in high school. Although Casianne was able to graduate, she too fought a losing battle to drugs. I remember coming home every summer to visit, and just noticing how drastically the drug had affected my family. Even now that my family is clean and

sober, the lasting impact drugs had on them is evident. Every one of my family members that used drugs has false teeth, including Casianne who is only twenty one years old.

Out of my family I will be the only one to continue on to college. I absolutely believe that is because of the impact drugs have had on my family and my life. Had they not experimented with drugs, every one of my siblings would have graduated. They would have careers, instead of working paycheck to paycheck. Even if you can conquer your addiction, any time you abuse drugs, it is a losing battle.

The impact of drugs is devastating. Even though my mother was only able to successfully save two of her children, to me that is amazing. Autumn and I would most likely be in the same situation as the rest of my family. My mom's efforts are reflected in the drive that both my sister and I possess.

Autumn thrived in Washington. After she graduated, she had plans to attend Washington State University to study childhood education. However, her dreams took her elsewhere. She is currently working as an intern at our church, and studying to be a Pastor.

Although I personally have never battled addictions with drugs, watching my family struggle with them was enough to prove to me that drugs aren't worth it. It isn't worth losing your life and your family to gain a temporary high.

Some may look at my experience as negative; however, I would not change a thing about my childhood. Had I not been surrounded by drug abusers I may not know the impact they have on one's life. Watching my family loose against drugs pushes me to strive. I want something more for my family than what was provided for me. Because I deserved better than meth, and I still do. 🙏

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

The editors and staff of *Alert Magazine* wish to congratulate Marie Dobson for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage her in the pursuit of her academic goals. We would also like to encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.