

Dark Days

Mental Health and Wellness Liturgy, Church of Reconciliation

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I had difficult challenges early on which led into addiction, estrangement from my family, severe depression, a feeling of hopelessness and ultimately led to homelessness where I reached my rock bottom. I never felt content with anything, I was never happy, I never enjoyed life. I tried to numb myself and I didn't want to deal with reality because reality was painful; reality hurt. I turned to alcohol and later drugs in an attempt to fill a void. I decided that my life wasn't worth living anymore and that I was going to end it. Being afraid of pain, I prolonged the suicide for years through self-destructive habits. Finally it got so bad that the only way out was death. I attempted suicide passively and actively on many occasions. In January of 2018 I had nothing left. I was getting ready to turn 44 and I told myself that if things weren't better by the time I was 45 I was going to kill myself. And I made a plan to end my life in one year. But in that year, I told myself I would do whatever it took to try and mend some of the broken pieces of my life.

Acceptance

When I was 37, I was diagnosed with Bipolar. I was given medication to take. I was still in denial about my mental illness and I was still drinking and using drugs heavily. I wouldn't take the medicine as prescribed, so the medicine never had a chance to work.

During the course of making the decision to kill myself in a year, I meditated a lot, and asked God if she would help me. I ended up at the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center. I entered a six month recovery program. I thought it was a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center, but little did I know this was the place I would get help for and begin to accept my mental illness. Because I always thought in the past that my problem was alcohol and if I cleaned up the alcohol my life would get better, but I had been sober for a while and the problems were still there. I got reconnected with the Center for Health Care Services and I started taking my medications again. I was always tired, I gained a lot of weight, I was a zombie. But I wanted to take an active part in my recovery, so I didn't want to be a zombie. I wanted to do whatever it took to make it better. I was tired of sleeping my life away. I finally got a doctor who was empathetic, listened to me and changed my medicine. It was a positive change that allowed me to be an active participant with the things going on around me. Life is now interesting and I enjoy it! I never thought I would. I am happy to say I am happily 45...I made it!

Recovery

Today I live in recovery. I have reconnected with my dad, my church, my family. I have reconnected with myself. I have learned how to live life differently. I am not abusing drugs and

alcohol. I have a girlfriend, I get out of bed in the morning, I volunteer with NAMI, I am an active participant in my own life.

Hope

My hope for the future is continued joy, success in my recovery and symptom free days. I enjoy being able to give back, helping people who struggle with mental illness. To me, that is doing something worthwhile. Having a life purpose gives me hope. That keeps me healthy. I am studying to be a Mental Health Peer Specialist and I am learning new things. I am living proof that recovery is possible, through hard work, faith and medication. Just remember never give up; ask for help. Thank you very much. Christ's Peace.