

December 2006

All I can remember from a very young age was living everyday in fear and pain. At the age of five, I was already being physically and emotionally abused by my father on a daily basis. I and my sisters and step-mother lived in fear. Me and my sisters were constantly grounded and couldn't go out other than to school. We were trapped. For the most part, we could hide it and not talk or tell anyone about it. At the age of eleven things were bad if not worse! I and my sisters started using Marijuana and alcohol to escape from the pain and as a way to cope with living and survive with my alcoholic and abusive Father. I remember him breaking plates over my head at the dinner table and beating me with his belt or fist. One night he grabbed me by the throat and stuck my head through the ceiling. My neck got caught and I was hanging from the ceiling. He left me there while my sisters grabbed at my ankles to pull me back down. I was still drinking and smoking weed to deal with the pain.

At the age of 15 things got really bad. At first he held me down on the floor by the throat choking me and at the same time punched me in the head about 10 times with a closed fist. I got up (I didn't not fight or hit him back) but I looked him in the eyes and said to him are you finished and walked to my room. This made him angrier because I was used to the pain by now. A couple of weeks later I got in trouble for bad mouthing my stepmother. Instead of beating me, he went into the gun cabinet and instead of getting out a gun he got out a machete and tried to cut off my head. I blocked it with my left wrist which left a deep cut all the way to the bone. When we got to the hospital the police asked me how it happened. I lied and told them he was teaching me how to knife fight.

At the age of seventeen, he was working in the garage and caught fire by an explosion. The fire department and paramedics took him to the hospital where they flew him to the burn center in a helicopter. I saw him before they took him. He had third degree burns on over 90 percent of his body. During this time I was traumatized. I began to drink excessively and did whatever drugs I could get my hands on, including uppers and downers, cocaine, acid, etc., anything to escape reality again.

Two months later he died in the burn center. I continued using more heavily and in a short time I had a complete nervous breakdown. I was committed to a state hospital and would be in and out of these mental hospital for the next 20 years. Back then, it was a horrible place where they constantly shot me up with thiorazine and haloperidol among other drugs against my will, on a daily basis. I was court committed and they kept me there for a full year. I got out and one year later, my grandmother who had been like a mother to me died. I had been living with her for a couple of years now. I had another nervous breakdown and ended up back in the same state hospital for another 9 months. I could not properly deal with all this living hell so my alcohol and drug use got even worse instead of better.

During my 20's and 30's, I ended up in jail at least 15 times and ended up in one psychiatric hospital after another. I still could not deal with the pain of the abuse or the

pain and grief of loss. In the hospital I was told I was manic depressive, psycho, bi-polar. They put me on one medication after another.

Finally, I was arrested for cocaine possession in 2005 and put on Proposition 36. It was then that I met my Probation officer Mr. Oden. During our initial meeting he asked me if I wanted to get a better understanding as to why I used drugs for an extended period of time. As we talked, he asked me about my past as a child and my teenage and adult life. He was the first person who got me to see that as child all I knew was neglect and abuse and that I didn't get the emotional security I needed as a child. He helped me to see that the fear of my Father had still been with me all these years and that's why I continued to use drugs and alcohol. This made a lot of sense to me. I had never let go of my past and he (my father) was still a factor in my life. I was still living in fear of him all these years later. He talked more and more with me. Mr. Oden made it clear to me that I didn't have to use anymore over my father and that I never had to use again. I believed him.

After accepting this reality, I was able to start healing. Mr. Oden helped me to see that I could finally start to live my life without this demon (fear of my Father) ever hurting me again.

I can now start to live my life without fear and start to feel good about myself without the use of drugs. What a relief this has been. I feel much better now. I am very grateful to Mr. Oden for showing me he cared and wanting to help me. And he has done so!!

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Mr. H (Abuse Victim)

PS: When we first met, Mr. H, was taking 6 or more forms of medication for his depression. By the time he ended his Probation grant he stated he was taking one form of medication. He stated that he didn't need them anymore due to his coming to terms with his Father.