

Dear ASAP,

I attended your program in July of 2007. At the time I joined, it had been only a few weeks since I had admitted my addiction to my family. I was in a dark place in my life and couldn't find a way out. My family and I had grown so far apart because of me. Before I started the program, I was depressed and couldn't deal with the reality of what I had done and who I had become. I had become a monster, when I looked in the mirror, I didn't like who I saw. I couldn't even recognize myself. I didn't believe that I could start a new leaf in life that didn't include drugs. The idea was so foreign to me and my self esteem was at an all time low that any dream I had of being old, fun-loving self was lost to me.

When I did start the program, I had little faith that I could heal not only my body and mind but my family as well. Waking up and facing the day, became more like a chore than the joy I had once felt. I couldn't stand seeing my family, not out of hate, but out of regret of what I was putting everyone through. Then something happened, the more I continued with the program, the better I felt. There weren't any secrets anymore, all the chips had fallen and my family knew everything. The lying was over, the monster was starting to die and a new person was emerging.

Half-way through the program I started having nightmares of myself doing drugs again. When I woke, I was so scared that I had relapsed that it would take me a while to realize that it didn't happen. It was during one of the many group sessions that I told everyone about the nightmares I'd been having. It didn't show me to be reassured that the dreams of using drugs were again normal. What did I do now, I was afraid of becoming the monster again? For the first time, in a long time, I had a goal. I wanted rid of the drugs and I didn't want to become a monster, which was focused only on the drgs. And through ASAP, I had the means to achieve it.

I accomplished a lot in the next few weeks. I received my high school diploma, was becoming closer with my family, and I was now able to start to come to terms with why I had used drugs and all the emotional stress of it. I was starting to be myself again. And it felt great to be me again. Instead of dreading going to session, I couldn't wait to go. Each day was better than the one before, even when I doubted myself, I had people behind me that cared and helped me. It didn't matter what the problem or if I was having a bad day, ASAP was there. I enjoyed it the most on family night, my

grandfather never missed a meeting and it was during that time, that we bonded again. Everything was becoming better again.

When I finished, I was scared of facing the world again. I knew that I could relapse, that I could put myself in the situation to make it happen. Despite all the fear, it didn't happen. It's been close to three years and I've been clean and sober since leaving ASAP. Asll that I learned and took home with me has helped me not to go back to that dark part in my life. I don't live with the regret of what caused me to go to ASAP, life is too short to dwell on it. I'm aware that it happened, but it doesn't control me or define me as a person. I define who I am by staying true to myself and those around. There are no dark secrets waiting to pop out, nor is there any part of me that is afraid of a relapse.

As I'm writing this, I'm looking at the coin that was given to me upon completing the program. On one side it says, "who is driving your bus?" At one point I found it difficult to answer that question. But now I can say without any doubt, fear, or self pity. I'm driving my beautiful purple bus with the windows down and the music turned up. With nothing in front of me but the life I lost, fought for, and found again. Thank you ASAP!!!

P.S.

To those who are going through the program now, stick with it. Even when it seems like the world around you is closing in. In the end, it's worth it. Being yourself again is the greatest joy a person can have. If you don't believe me, at the very least ask yourself one thing. Are you happy with your drug of choice? If so, What has it ever done for you? What are you doing for yourself? For your family?