



“I SPENT NINE YEARS DESTROYING MY LIFE AND MY BODY. I WANT TO NOT ONLY BE BETTER THAN I WAS BEFORE, BUT TO HELP OTHERS SO THEY DON’T HAVE TO GO THROUGH WHAT I DID.”

Shortly after graduating from college with a degree in finance, Kyle landed a full-time position with a bank and moved into a downtown apartment with a friend. He recalls “living the dream” as his career progressed and he became financially independent.

“I loved it,” says Kyle. “They were the best two years I can remember.”

One day, driving home from work, Kyle was involved in a three-car accident. He was fortunate to walk away with little more than a stiff neck and a sore back. But his fortunes quickly changed. A doctor prescribed an opiate to ease the pain from the whiplash. Kyle kept refilling the prescription until it expired, and eventually turned to the street to satisfy his craving. He became what he calls a “functioning addict” for nine years.

“I was in denial,” says Kyle. “I thought it was under control. I wasn’t ready to stop.”

None of his co-workers, friends, or family were aware of his addiction for years, Kyle believes, because on a day-to-day basis he was easy-going and functional. But in 2016, Kyle was hospitalized with a staph infection. His father found syringes and heroin in a backpack Kyle asked him to bring to the hospital.

“That’s when I realized I had a problem,” Kyle recalls. His journey to recovery was difficult. It was a challenge for Kyle and his family to get the kind of help he needed. He eventually found an out-patient clinic less than two hours from his home and began a therapy regimen that included counseling and medication-assisted treatment. But within a year he relapsed.

Kyle was hospitalized again in December of 2018 with a staph infection that turned into sepsis. After four days in an intensive care unit, he was moved to an assisted living facility where he spent the next few months.

“That was the turning point,” says Kyle. He remembers spending the holidays alone, looking at pictures a niece had drawn for him, realizing he had no money, no friends. He concluded, “I have got to do something about this.”

After being discharged, he returned to the out-patient clinic and began a new regimen with regular counseling and an injectable medication-assisted treatment.

Two years on, Kyle has achieved his goal of launching a successful online business that sells high-end used clothing. And he has overcome his physical and mental craving for drugs.

Kyle has more goals to achieve, including traveling and starting a non-profit organization that will help recovering addicts access the same resources that enabled his journey to recovery.

“I spent nine years destroying my life and my body,” says Kyle, now age 37. “I want to not only be better than I was before, but to help others so they don’t have to go through what I did.”

INSPIRED BY PATIENTS

