

## **NABILL, AKA NAB: ENGLAND, UK**

This is a short story of my life and where, what I suffer from, took me until I found out what was wrong with me many years later. I was brought up in a home with my Mum who was a loving caring mother who did the best she could, and a hard working father who did the best he knew. There will be a few things that I find irrelevant to write as I would like to describe as best I can my disease of addiction and keep this simple and straight forward.

As a young boy, I remember never really listening much and always doing what I wanted to do. This attitude I took to primary, then secondary school. I was always being told off for not listening and misbehaving. I *was* always staring out of the classroom window thinking of how I'd be better off out there than here in school, day dreaming and fantasising. I was, from an early age, irritable, restless, discontent and never really felt fulfilled in anything I did. I can only describe it as empty inside and never at ease. I'd be very good at telling you and showing everyone I was ok, but from within myself I know now I was never really satisfied in much I did. I was good at art and found that was because it took me away from my reality, drawing all sorts and using my imagination was wonderful. It took me from the here and now, and also away for a moment from how I felt then. I started to shoplift and sell products at school and found this new and exciting, and the getting away with it was actually giving me a buzz and also a sense of meaning and purpose, to supply others with their wants and be needed. I suppose I could say making me more liked than most.

This progressed, combined with the bunking off school, the smoking, and the first substance I took to get me out of my head at the age of eleven – lighter gas. When I say to get out of my head, I mean because I was always in my head. My thinking was not normal. It was delusional and it always got me in trouble and continued to for years to come. The drinking and girls, the being known for being naughty, and the character I became, I thought – this is great! I loved it. It was fun but I never could see the harm and destruction that I started to cause as it went on and also the lie I was living. I was lost. The drugs grew from cocaine, clubbing, drinking, girls and fun, to getting caught and known by the police by 16 years of age. I recently found a drug agency appointment booklet that tells me I had a problem then, and was already seeking help. But what I know now is I suffer from mental blank spots

forgetting how bad things are, how they have become and how I hurt those who love me dearly. I forget how powerless I am over the first substance I take and where I end up and what I end up doing.

As my existence went on and my disease of addiction, in all aspects of the word, progressed, my consequences got worse. I couldn't hold a job. I couldn't stop using and I couldn't even get honest with myself. I was living a lie and became many different characters and felt I wore many masks, never really knowing who I really was or what I really liked. I was lost and only 19 years old by then. My girlfriend then, who I thought I loved, fell pregnant and I was over the moon. This was it. Time to be a Dad and be responsible. Time to put down, by now, the ecstasy, the cocaine and drink, the gambling and crime, the affairs, the dishonesty and become a loving partner and father who my baby deserves. Time to get a job and keep it. Time to stop getting in trouble with the police, courts, probation, and authorities. Time to grow up and be responsible. I swear I was wholeheartedly telling the truth. As my baby was born in 1992, as I held her in my arms when she came out, and as I felt the love and joy many experience from the beautiful moment, as I gazed at her and felt overwhelmed with happiness and pride, I believed that that was it. This time I am not going to use anymore, this is it. Leaving the hospital on the way to celebrate, I all of a sudden thought it would make sense to get some heroin for the last time, as I didn't even know by now I had a habit after trying it regularly to come down off cocaine after clubbing and dabbling with it during weekdays. I was in trouble, then the insanity and powerlessness was on me, believing I'll just get one – that's all.

As my illness progressed to more drugs daily, more crimes and shoplifting to feed my habit, more depression, my partner was getting worn out, resentful and uncommunicative, and my daughter's safety was at harm from the madness I was living and bringing home - also to my Mum's house and basically everyone who had anything to do with me. This had become where my using took me and others with me too; a place of hardship, struggles, unhappiness and fear. Speaking of fear, I now know I was still that frightened little boy at school that would do anything to be liked, anything to be wanted and feel needed. Anything to please you and also get gratification and affirmation, even though I was doing wrong. I felt worthless and lonely inside. I believe my spirit was lost and needed to feel part of a group or

something, to feel worth something and hopefully all would be OK, but it never lasted. Not the drugs, the relationships, the comfort of being needed and being loved, my daughter and the love I have for her – all not enough to fill me inside. How scared I was being and feeling like this. ‘HELP’ I was screaming inside, and my thinking and thought process saying ‘don’t tell them, keep this to yourself, they will judge you’ and so on. Totally lost and in a dark place of isolation and despair, my appointments with probation from early on, like I said, lead me to drug agencies, support workers, to basically try and help. I was still trying but still with the delusion that I can cut down my drugs. I can swap substances. I can do it weekends. I can change where I’m living and I can change the people, places, and the things that made me use. With support from these different associations, I can do this. No, I might add, it never worked. It became worse than ever. I was in my twenties and now going through detoxes abroad and swearing that this is it. I’ve had enough. No more. As soon as I’d land, the thought enters my head to stop off and just get a bit. It says to me, ‘you wouldn’t get a habit from just a bit. It’s not like you are going to do it again and again like before, you know better now...’ This is how it speaks to me in my own voice!! I forget the pain and the sleepless nights of agony, the consequences and the promises to myself and my loved ones and all those who I try to make believe that I have had enough and will never use again. In a very short time after that thought, then the act of using due to that thought and my powerlessness over it, I am back in it, and worse than ever, every time it happens. The same as after every time I get out of prison – ‘just get a bit, a treat, you have done so well’ – that’s what it tells me. Insanity in every aspect of my unreasonable thinking. I can take this problem with me everywhere as it is only me, with support, who can fix this – as I found out later on.

I hope I have explained a little bit about who I was and what I became. In 2008, May 13<sup>th</sup>, I was transferred to an open prison from HMP Wood Hill. In this open prison, there were meetings called NA and CA (Narcotics Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous). They were an hour and a half, and consisted of drug addicts trying to get clean, supporting each other. First they do a few readings and then someone shares their experience of what it was like, how it became, and how it is now. This was an amazing experience for someone like me who thought I was the only one who thought and felt like I did. They were inmates of all walks of life and addictions. Many were lifers and many weren’t but, surprisingly, all were so honest

about their thinking, their fears and their illnesses. I felt at home for the first time in my life. This, for some reason, I knew just might work for me. They said there were twelve steps and I needed a sponsor to guide me through them. I agreed to myself that this I am willing to do, once I was out of prison, as I only had a few weeks left. At the gates, I was waiting for my discharge grant and looking forward to seeing everyone when I got home; with the hope of these new found friends and meetings, I felt hopeful that it was going to be OK. As I headed to the train station and got on board, that thinking once again started to corrupt me – ‘get some on the way home, no-one will know’ etc., etc., etc. and I’m off. Powerless and hopeless as ever, once again I let myself and everyone around me down again. So the same insanity again, ending up, this time, in more dangerous situations and dramas. To top it off, suicide seemed very appealing. I thought I couldn’t take it anymore. I had had enough. Whilst on probation and a drug rehabilitation requirement, I found meetings in the evening to go to. By now things had started to change. I felt there was a way out and for the first time, I worked hard towards changing and becoming that member of society and the community I always wanted to be. Normal, hard working, have kids, a job I like, a woman I love, a home, DIY, holidays, savings, cars, fun and laughs, happy times and joys – basically doing life. But most of all, being able to sleep peacefully, to like myself, to know my value, to be content and not to obsess about getting high off crack, heroin, prescription drugs, drink – whatever. Amazingly the thought does not even enter my head. The support of my probation officer, my drug worker and others, and me getting totally honest and reaching out for the help and taking a course of action called the twelve step programme, has helped me achieve this and more. Please believe me when I say I am the chronic addict and very much so of the hopeless variety. When I pick up the first one, not the last one, that is the problem and it’s what I do in between my last relapse, and until my next - if I don’t continue to practice today.

Since coming into recovery three and a half years ago, I have come off probation and PPO list after years being on it. I have passed exams, and done courses and achieved certificates in many things; I have won achievement awards, learnt new things and done different jobs. I have become experienced in a few different careers if I choose to do them and I have a life I could only have dreamed of when I was stuck in active addiction. I also had nothing going on spiritually and mentally and I felt dead for many years but today my thinking is clear and my

spirit is free. What a wonderful feeling that is. I will end this with some sadness. I suffer as a father who lost his baby girl, Amira, while in recovery – not even a year clean. I miss her so much and always wonder what would have been as I see other kids her age now, and what they do. Father's day I spend at her grave and most Sundays and Mothers days – so this is in memory of my baby girl and I hope someone might read this and find hope and a way out from under, if they relate to it or not. I am the father though who I always wanted to be to my two step children and a loving partner and person as best I can to all. When my baby died, something inside me, a part of me, died too and whilst this traumatic time happened – and many others that I won't go into all with great impact – I did not run, I did not use or even want to, or think about picking up a drink or drug to relieve my suffering and pain. How amazing. That is what I call only something I could have dreamed about before as I would use on anything, absolutely anything. But not today thank you. Due to the twelve step programme, support, and being grateful and helping where I can, I am free. Thank you. My name is Nab.