

Hi my name is Nicholas Farias. I am 34 years old and I'm an addict and an alcoholic. I've been working with Journey to Recovery in Newport, Vermont for the last two and a half years now. And so much has happened in those years. Times have been good and times have been hard but Journey to Recovery and all the staff have been there for me. I'm from Fall River, Mass, and fell into drugs really early in my life. I grew up in a blue collar family and my dad was the backbone to everything, he was the caregiver. But my father ended up dying when I was thirteen and that's when my life turned upside down. I can remember saying to my mom that I will take care of the family now. Being a young boy I had no idea what that meant. Which lead me into a lot of hardships in my life. I come from a family where we didn't have dinner together and we never said we loved each other. Even though I had everything, the feeling of belonging was never there. Which lead me down a road of searching and looking for a place where I belong.

I spent over 18 years trying to find my place and searching for that love that I never reached as a young boy. Over them 18 years I used drugs and alcohol to fill that void, to run from my emotions. But there was always one thing that was strong in my heart and that was to have a family and to be a father. And that dream came true, but it came true to a man who was 30 years old but emotionally only 17. I ended up getting myself into some trouble where I was no longer able to be with my family or even be around my son. And not being able to deal with my emotions, I turned back to the one thing I knew would make me feel better and feel loved and that was alcohol.

At this time I was living in a hotel, drinking my emotions away but knew I needed the one thing back in my life and that was my son and my family. That's when I found Journey to Recovery. I can still remember the first time I called, I was in the parking lot and I was too scared to walk in so I said I would be by tomorrow. When tomorrow came I showed up and I was welcomed with open arms. But I did not trust anyone in there. I started building a relationship with the recovery coaches and Lila. But that still wasn't enough, I still pushed them all away. But Lila never gave up on me and she would always check in and see how I was doing and she would always listen. So I began to open up and to trust which was something I would never do. For about the first year I would come and go but Lila never gave up, or any of the staff there which showed me they cared and I had a safe place where I belonged. I ended up leaving Newport again and went to Burlington thinking I could stay sober and put together a life where I could get my family and son back.

Well that didn't happen but once again Lila never gave up even when times were bad and we would bump heads when she would tell me the hard truths of my actions, she still showed she cared and that I belonged to something so much better than just alcohol.

So once again I came back to Newport, back to Journey to Recovery, back to the loving and caring people that I have been looking for as a family. Well we make a plan and off I go to rehab, I go so I do my time and keep doing my check-ins with Lila and then she asked me to come live at her sober house so I say yes. I've now been here over two months and to say everything is great well I would be lying. So I spend my first month or so going to a meeting every day and doing check-ins and attending groups at Journey to Recovery. But when I walk through the doors this time I felt like I was home, I felt like I belonged.

I have been learning so much about my emotions and my triggers and about community and unity and this is all from Journey to Recovery. I've learned to trust and I've learned that people want to see me grow in my recovery and there is no better feeling than that. I am now back to work at JP Sicard Construction and it can be hard but I've learned to be a light and to share my experience, strength and hope and keep trying to build a community even outside the doors of Journey to Recovery. I have visits with my son all thanks to Journey to Recovery. I have to thank Lila and her team and all the passion and commitment they show to each person who walks through the doors. Because if it wasn't for them I don't know where I would be right now. Because of all the tools and commitment they have and how transparent they are, they have given me the strength to trust what they say and to believe in the process of things turning around. I am becoming the man and father I always set out to be. So I am glad I walked through the doors and because Lila has given me so much hope, and I'm now someone who is back in the world, working and being a productive member of society, and also spreading the word of hope and growing a community and seeing the unity come together even outside the doors. I have to thank Lila for never giving up on me. I'm so grateful for Journey to Recovery and to be a part of something so amazing and special, it is an honor. I wouldn't have any of these things if I never found that place where I belong- Journey to Recovery. Thank you for your time, and I can't say how grateful I am to have walked through those doors. Thank you Lila for never giving up hope on me and thank you for teaching me the tools to live a clean and sober and happy and stable life.