

UNDESERVED LOVE

When I was a child I was raised in a very dysfunctional home. My mother and stepfather both drank a lot. It seemed everything revolved around alcohol. My step dad was quite mean. I was never told that they loved me so never knew what love was or that it ever existed. I started drinking at the age of 11. When I drank I felt accepted. For me it was a way of life, all of my friends drank. I thought anyone who never drank was abnormal. This lifestyle stayed with me for many years. I tried to stop many times but could not. Even in my married life I could not stop for my wife and five children. No matter how many times I promised to stop, and meant it, alcohol and drugs ran my life. It came to the point that I felt I was not loved, how could anyone love a person like the one I had become. My wife told me she loved me, but I would say "Why?", besides I never knew how to give or receive love because it was a stranger to me.

One day in desperation, after 39 yrs.
of living with an addict, my wife
gave me an ultimatum!

She said if I did not quit using she was going to leave for one week, and if I continued she would leave me for one month, then if I still did not stop we would sell the house and go our separate ways. This wasn't the desire of her heart (actually it was killing her inside), but something had to be done. I didn't give it much thought, because she'd threatened many times before, but did nothing. However, this time she did leave for a week.

Unawares to me my family had been working with a group called Family Outreach Ontario for several weeks. As a result, around 8:30 a.m. on a Sunday morning, my wife and children, now adults came to my home along with a couple of members of Family Outreach. At this point I won't get into all that was said except two

things that really caused me to take notice. The first thing was they each shared how my actions, and my way of life was affecting them. I never realized this until they told me. How it affected them separately, each one told their own thing. **I thought the only one I was hurting was me.** I did not realize addiction was a family disease. I also believed my wife and children hated me because of my actions so the other thing that touched me was they each gave me a hand written letter telling me, along with some of the good points they'd seen in me, that they loved me. They each told me they loved me. Exactly what I was longing to hear.

After realizing that this was for real and if I ever wanted to get my life in order, that now would be the time. All my trying in the past never worked so I'll try this. I sat there in tears, to think they really did love me and there are others who actually cared enough to help me.

I was taken to detox where I stayed a short while to "dry out", and then I went to a treatment centre for four weeks. There I learned that I had a disease called alcoholism/drug addiction and it could be arrested. I also learned that using was only a by-product of the problem, the problem was within, I had to learn how to change my life. As I put my faith in God and worked the 12 steps I found it really works. I find that as I practice this program of recovery that I have no desire or need for drugs or alcohol.

I believe that it was those letters that caused me to start to believe that there is hope. I have a family that loves me in my corner. I believe God's love is shown through people. I thank God and all who were involved in that intervention on that Sunday morning for giving me the will to change. Also I am now able to be there for someone else to share my experience, strength and hope with, only because of love.

ANONYMOUS