

Memoirs of a cocaine addict

MEMOIRS OF A COCAINE ADDICT

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INTRODUCTION

I am 43 years old and a drug addict.

I am not celebrity, just an everyday person who has struggled with drugs and addiction. I do not claim to have all the answers but I can only try and tell you my story as honestly and as openly as I can.

I am intelligent and strong in so many ways. I had everything going for me before my demise from drugs and slowly but surely every day now this is becoming the case for me again. That is if I am strong enough to not let the drugs consume me again and that sadly is something I cannot guarantee as once a drug addict, always a drug addict and the only way out of their grasp is total abstinence and even then the temptation can return at any time and when you least expect it.

The future will never be bright if you take drugs and the reality is usually no future at all. With drugs there is no happy ending and unless you stop, it can only continue to go downwards.

I decided to write this book in the hope that just one person will read this and avoid taking the route into drugs that I did. I hope the message will be strong enough to stop you going down the path I did into a life of hell, making all that I have been through not for nothing.

If you were to ask me now whether in hindsight I would have ever tried drugs if I knew then what pain they would cause me and the impact they would have on my life, I can now answer that honestly with a resounding no. It has taken me many years to reach this conclusion as drugs have a way of making you remember it differently

Hindsight is a wonderful thing.

Chapter One

My background

I grew up in an era where drugs were not readily available like they seem to be these days. During my school years drugs never crossed my path and although we had the odd lessons on the dangers of drugs (only one or two I can recall throughout my whole school years) from an external source, it was not something I or the majority of other students could relate to as it was not something that we did. Yes we experimented with fags and booze but no one did drugs or even knew anybody that did.

In fact it was not until my last year at secondary school did this change. A rumor went around the playground that two boys in my year may have tried drugs.

Everyone avoided those two boys after that. No one thought they were cool, they were weirdos, losers, druggies doomed to end up sleeping rough on a park bench. Not one person was impressed and certainly not the slightest bit curious to try drugs too. That was how it seemed to be at the other schools in the area too. Even the cult TV shows that we all watched such as Grange Hill portrayed drugs as something that would only come into the path of the odd person and that person being the outcast and ostracized for it. I am sure everyone of a similar age to me remembers the Sammo storyline from Grange Hill and the cast of Grange Hill subsequently releasing the record "Just say no"!

By the time my brother, who is seven years younger than me, was at senior school the experience was very different with drugs at school. The majority of pupils had smoked pot, some even smoked it at school and some even sold it at school. He was doing these things from the age of 12 and was not in the minority. Even more alarming was there were others just as young selling acid, ecstasy and speed at school. I dread to think what it must be like in the schools now but it seems to be something the education system is turning a blind eye to as it's not something they know how to deal with or truly understand. In the past I have even had all night drug benders with people who are teachers! That is their choice to make as adults and while teachers are not drug tested as part of their work then it will not change. The issue is though the children who at such a young age believe that taking drugs are the norm and seem totally unaware of the damage these substances are having on their undeveloped brains and bodies. The children who I know who smoke weed regularly believe it to be a harmless drug as they say it's natural and are aware it's legal or delegalised in many other countries. These days what the majority are smoking is skunk, not weed. Skunk is not natural but a chemically enhanced drug probably 20 times stronger than weed. In my opinion skunk should be in the same category as cocaine and heroin, a class A drug.

My brother and his friends smoked skunk from the age of 12. My brother is now a paranoid schizophrenic but there is apparently no proof that this was the result of drug taking at an early age. Let me tell you though that of the three friends he smoked this with at school age, one had a breakdown later in his teens and eventually hung himself, one has spent the best

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part of the last 20 years in and out of mental homes and the other died of a drug overdose 15 years later. Coincidence maybe but personally I do not believe that.

Anyway back to my story....

After leaving school drugs were still not something that were in or around my life and still had a huge stigma attached to them. The stigma was enough to frighten most people I knew out of ever trying them. As an example, I remember when I at the age of 17/18 my boyfriend at the time had an older brother who smoked pot and he was seen as a rebel and no good and someone to fear and avoid. His whole family were ashamed so when my boyfriend told me and his friends that one night he had had a puff on his brothers joint, we all were absolutely shocked and worried, so much so that we felt concerned enough to tell his parents, he never did it again.

I and the friends I spent time with then were anti drugs and I never thought in a million years I would ever try them. I had no desire or curiosity whatsoever but all that was about to change in the following two years.

It was 1990, I was now 19 and a new phenomenon was becoming huge and had exploded over the past year – raving. A whole new craze that was built on a new style of dance music, illegal gatherings and of course ecstasy pills. A lot of my friends just dived straight into this new way of life but at first I was not all that interested but I was curious at their total buy in and excitement over it all.

Eventually I ended going to an illegal rave with them. It was exciting as no one knew where it was going to take place until last minute and we all listened to the illegal radio broadcasts waiting to hear the exact location. At first the area was announced so we set off in the car, music blaring. On the way the actually venue was announced and although you only got part of the address or clues to its whereabouts, when you saw other cars full of young people heading in the same direction you became part of an elite crowd who all felt connected by the excitement of it all and all helping each other to get there. Usually these raves were held in remote spots such as disused warehouses, old farm houses or fields. When we arrived the place would be full of happy people from all walks of life just wanting to dance to the music. Everyone seemed so friendly, relaxed and non judgemental. I did not take drugs that time or for the first few months of going to raves, I didn't need to as I always had such a brilliant time without them. I was also still weary of them and a little fearful but after being in that environment for a period of time that all subsided as being surrounded by people taking ecstasy became the norm. These people were having fun. Everyone was really friendly and everyone just talked to everyone, there were no fights, no drunken idiots just loads of happy smiley faces.

My first experience on ecstasy was not great at first. I took a quarter of a 'lovedove' pill and 20 minutes later was chucking my guts up and even though my friends had said it was normal to chuck up at first, I was thinking surely it cant be worth it. However when the nausea past I felt absolutely amazing. It was as if a whole new part of me, a new world had opened up to me. I felt confident, euphoric, full of energy, totally happy and without a care or worry in the world. I felt like I loved everyone and just wanted to be nice and kind to everyone, even those people I had not been too keen on in the past. I loved everyone and everyone loves you back. I felt truly blessed I had found this way of life.

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Thereafter I would take ecstasy every time I went raving which was usually every Fri and Saturday. The dose increased over the 5 years I spent raving but it never got out of control. I would take 2 sometimes 3 a night, half at a time. A night raving was a long night, starting at 9 or 10pm through to 6am but those 8 or 9 hours would go so fast and most of the time it felt like you had only been there an hour or so.

I did not see ecstasy as a drug anymore and used to think that if the whole world took it then it would be a nicer place with less war and crime. I was still anti drugs but to me then, cocaine and heroin were drugs and not something I would ever do. I had at that stage had the odd puff on a joint usually at the end of a night when it was being past around as this would take the edge of the ecstasy and aid sleep. I had been offered cocaine and acid during my rave years but always turned it down as I was not remotely interested. Same with alcohol, I had never been a big drinker anyway so actually saw drinking as a lot worse for you than ecstasy. I think most who took ecstasy never really drank anything other than water so a lot of people saw alcohol the same way I did.

Eventually I just outgrew the rave scene and after the 5 years or so of going every weekend, it became less frequent over time to me going maybe once a month. I still took the odd ecstasy pill but found myself preferring to smoke a bit more pot instead and opting for evenings around friends houses where there would always be a crowd of us older retired ravers.

It was on one of those evenings where I first tried cocaine. By then everyone was doing it and loving it so I decided to give it a go. I snorted a line and did not like it at all. I hated the feeling of it going up my nose, I hated the sensation of it trickling down the back of my throat, I thought the buzz was overrated and disappointing. In fact all it did was make me talk a lot and everyone seemed to just talk over each other talking crap. After about half hour the subtle buzz wore off and I couldn't see what all the hype was about. I was not interested in having another line so I didn't and didn't want to bother with it again. In my opinion all it had going for it was that because it wore off quickly and you could sleep after taking it, unlike ecstasy. I was aware it was highly addictive but could not see why. I felt certain I would never get addicted to it as I was not that keen on it but it was that delusional thinking that made it ok for me to do it again over the following months. Little did I think that 10 or so years later it would be my downfall.

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Chapter two

Cocaine causing problems

Over the next few years I did snort cocaine but it was infrequent from one month to the next and on those occasions it was never more than a couple of lines of an evening and that was all I ever wanted. I was not hooked and could take it or leave it. At that time there were some people in my crowd that were getting hooked and taking it on a weekly basis. I did not get this at all and thought they just lacked will power to not be able to take it or leave it. In a way I looked down on these people seeing them as weak and stupid. Some said they did not want to take it so regularly but still did so I had no sympathy for them as could not understand if they said they did not want to take it so regularly why then didn't they just not do it so regularly. I knew nothing about drug dependency or addiction, these people just lacked self control.

Life was good for me. I had just landed a great job in London that came with an amazing social life too so after a few months I decided to move to London and moved into a flat in central London, 5 minutes walk from Oxford Street, with a colleague from work.

At lot of the people I worked with took cocaine and liked to party at all the best places in London with no expense spared. I really was living the high life. We would go to champagne bars and order \$500 bottles of Crystal and have a line of cocaine so my cocaine intake increased and I was now doing it a couple of times a week but only one or two lines each time however at this time I remember wanting to do more and feeling disappointed when it was gone. It was the done thing so whenever the thought crossed my mind whether it was a problem I could justify it as that was what everyone was doing. Besides on some occasions I chose not to take it but looking back, on those occasions it was on my mind and my night would not be as good or I would leave earlier than usual.

After a year of living this way, things slowly started to go wrong at work as I was more focused on the social side. This was the culture of most companies in those years, high earnings, big bonuses and unlimited company expense accounts so the majority of business meetings were held in fancy bars and restaurants. I would come in late, go out for boozy lunch meetings and did not take work too seriously and just did what I needed to do, as did everyone else.

Despite this amazing social life, I felt down, insecure and lonely a lot of the time but I never admitted this to myself and just blocked out how I was really feeling by putting on an act being always happy, outgoing and the all time party girl and cocaine aided this. I was a big time party girl, out most nights but if I am honest, this was more to do with me not wanting to be on my own as that would mean having to face up to how I truly felt. The truth is I was not fooling anyone but myself as people close to me could see through it. The cracks were appearing and even my boss started to see through it. He told me he was concerned and that I needed to reign it in a bit. I would say I was ok, apologise, promise to sort it and get it under

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control and just carry on regardless. Manipulate him really by saying what he wanted to hear and just keep under the radar for a week or so.

At that time I don't know if I couldn't stop or didn't want to stop or whether I thought I didn't want to stop as I knew I couldn't.

Emotionally I was heading for a car crash but I pretended it was not happening as I was scared to death that the moment I allowed myself to believe it, I would fall apart. I was falling apart anyway and things had spiraled so far out of my control that I had no idea what to do about it so it was easier to block it out and pretend it was not happening. I was taking two or three grams of cocaine a week and drinking most lunchtimes and evenings. I knew it was a problem and a lot by most peoples standards and more than my colleagues were doing.

That episode finally ended with me falling apart in full view of everyone I worked with. One morning I just broke down in floods of tears on the steps of the office. I lost all control and just fell to pieces. Oblivious of my surroundings or who could see me, I just lied on the steps in the lobby and cried and cried and cried. I don't remember why or what was going on around me or how long I was there. It is all a blur.

A colleague took me to the UCI hospital which was closeby but I do not recall that either.

The next thing I remember is standing in the reception of the Gordon Mental Hospital, South London being booked in for a stay. Around me I could see mentally ill patients, severely mentally ill and some so sedated that they were vacant. I felt scared to death. Although I was in a bad way myself, inside I knew this was not where I needed to be, this place was not going to help me. I thought to myself that if I stayed there I may not ever get out. They would just sedate me and I would be lost in the system and become vacant too. Maybe I was still in denial and being there may have been the best place for me but something inside took over and I ran out of there like lightening down the road and around the corner.

I stood pinned against the wall until I plucked up enough courage to poke my head around the corner. I kept the entrance of the hospital in sight from my safe lookout point as I expected men in white coats to come out of the doors anytime soon in hot pursuit.

The colleague who had accompanied me there rang my mobile again and again but I was too scared to answer in case it was a ploy to get me back there. After 20 mins or so he came out of the hospital entrance onto the street still ringing me constantly. Once I was satisfied he was alone I answered his call and before he could speak I said to him over and over that I couldn't stay there and he had to trust me that I knew it was not the answer. To my relief he agreed as the place had really freaked him out too.

In the end I went to stay with some very good friends from my home town. I did not need to explain anything and they came and picked me up from London and took me back to their house. I do not think I spoke at all on the journey back or much at all over the next few days.

I was burnt out and rockbottom and for the first few days I just cried, slept, cried some more, starred vacantly out the window and didn't say much. I didn't know what to say or what the hell had happened but I was frightened and it was the wake up call I needed to change my life.

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I saw a counselor a few days later once I stopped crying who informed me that I was depressed and sent me off to the doctors for antidepressants. I did not agree but was too weak to argue and at that time just wanted to feel better so happy to try anything.

She was right and after two or so weeks once the happy pills kicked in I realized just how low I had been for a very long time. Everything seemed brighter and sharper. Even the grass looked greener literally. My head was clear, I felt motivated and alive. The counselor helped as did talking honestly and openly to my friends and two weeks later I was back at work.

The only way was up for me now. I stayed off the drugs, cut down on going out and drinking, joined the gym and looked after myself. It was easy to change as I never wanted to feel like that again. I was also aware that if I stayed in that job there was a risk of getting caught up in the social side again and tempted back to the drink and drugs which was not what I wanted. I was also ashamed of my very public meltdown and knew people would never forget and that it would hinder my career there. I wanted to focus on work and although the firm assured me my episode would not be held against me, I felt a new start was the best thing for me.

I bought a flat in south London and got a new job in Surrey, which was a good job without the fast pace of working in London.

I settled in to living a normal life, avoiding friends and colleagues I had associated with drugs for a while and filled my time with other activities not involving too much partying. I felt happy most of the time and of course had some lows but I could deal with them as part of life.

I still had the odd big night out but these were few and far between, less often than monthly. At first on these nights I did not touch drugs but after a while I did partake in a few lines on these occasions as I would sometimes feel I was missing out. I would feel lousy and low after those nights but seeing as they were only every few months I was prepared for it and could rationalize feeling crap after for a day. Those nights also served as a reminder to me that I did not miss that lifestyle at all as although I would enjoy the night at the time, feeling lousy the next day would put me off wanting to do it again for a while.

You are probably thinking if it made me feel lousy then why did it not put me off ever doing it again. Well the day after I would always swear I never wanted to do it again and mean it but that feeling leaves you in time (for some as quick as the next day) so a month or so later I would have totally forgotten and do it again. I was unaware then that this is a part of drug addiction and how addiction can be very cunning and irrational to the point of insanity. The definition of insanity according to Einstein is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result and that is the nature of addiction.

Doing a few lines less often than monthly I did not see as a problem, I was back in control and could take it or leave it. Besides I was not like those people, the druggies, I thought. I did not even like other people on drugs as most would lie and cheat and talk crap but still I did it albeit not often thinking I was not the same as them.

Chapter three
Period of normality

A few years on and life was still good and getting even better.

I had landed a great new job with the big four accountancy firms back in London. I had a lovely flat in South London and had also bought a cottage in my home town of Harpenden. I had a new sports car and plenty of money. I had loads of friends from all over the place and a fantastic social life which still only involved taking drugs less than once a month.

I was stable and in control with only a foot in that way of life. Those nights were a chance to escape and let off steam and seeing as for the past few years I was only having those kind of nights on a monthly basis, I convinced myself over time that it was ok to go wild on those night and push the limit with drugs. In fact it got to the point on those nights that I would try and pack in as much as I could, knowing I would not be taking drugs again for perhaps another month. Those nights out became all nighters full of drugs and my tolerance for them was high.

I was sure I did not want to associate with people who took drugs all the time as I did not like them much. I saw them as flawed and untruthful, false and untrustworthy. I did not see these people as my friends nor did I want them as friends. I saw how people completely changed when they took drugs from how they were normally, doing things they would not normally do like cheat. I have never cheated on drugs but I understood why they did as the thought would cross my mind but I was also aware when the drugs wore off so did the thoughts and the object of your desire had no appeal anymore so that always stopped me doing that as well as knowing I did not want a boyfriend on drugs but on those nights out I could fit in and play the game i.e. take loads of drugs, then go back to my real life utterly disgusted with these people.

My new job was going well and I happened to meet a wonderful guy there who was intelligent, handsome, fun and had never touched drugs. He was in to healthy living and although he did go out drinking and had a good social life, everything was in moderation. I know it is a cliché but I knew from the moment I met him that he was going to be an important person in my life for a very long time and he was, we got married after being together 9 years, we got divorced a year later due to my drug addiction.

When we got together my life changed. He was intolerant of anyone who smoked a cigarette let alone take drugs. He knew about my past and how I had dabbled in drugs and although my crazy nights out came to be no more than twice a year, he was not aware or even thought I had taken drugs for years but I still did on those occasions and would stay at a friends to hide it. I did not see it as a problem and I felt I could not tell him as he was too far the other way and would not understand.

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I realize now he was my stop button. During our time together we went to the gym most days before work and I was the most physically and mentally fit that I had ever been. I gave up smoking cigarettes, ate extremely healthy and organic food and socialized with normal and intelligent friends doing normal things. We traveled extensively and even did the trek to Everest base camp. We had a great life and a bright future but I still had that dark side to my life which I kept from him and hated doing so.

Keeping a secret like that I now know only holds you back in a relationship but I was frightened of how he would react if I told him as he would not have understood but mainly I was ashamed of that side of me.

I was able to justify my deceit because my drug taking was now so infrequent and by blaming him because his opinion of drugs was too rigid in my eyes. I knew if I told him then I would never be able to take drugs again and seeing as I was not doing them often I did not want to cut it off completely however I see now that his opinion of drugs is right and if I would have been honest he would have no doubt given me the choice of him or drugs and reluctantly I would have chosen him but in later years would have spared myself from the destruction that drugs then brought me and would have been eternally grateful to him. However I did not see it as a drug problem back then as I thought I was only dabbling and I did not want to stop.

What I have since learned is that I was always an addict but back then I was able to swap one addiction for another but looking back it was as clear as day. My interest in most things was the outcome and not the activity.

Looking back the signs were there. I remember my ex husband pointing out that even when I was eating sweets, I would keep eating them until they were all gone whether I wanted them or not and even if I felt sick eating them. Same with drinks, if we were out and he said lets shoot off soon, I would say well lets get another drink first whether I wanted one or not. In the gym I would try to race through trying to cram so much in, trying to beat what I had done before by running a little further or faster or lifting an extra weight. When I decided on a new hobby I would have to have everything associated with it and then lose interest and be on to the next fad. The same pattern appears all through my life. I would be booking the next holiday the moment we got back from one. When a beauty product came out I would buy it as well as every other product from the range.

When I decided I wanted something or to do something it had to be straight away otherwise I would fixate on it and be on edge and anxious until I got it or did it. Everything was always a hundred miles an hour until I got my "fix". It was just the way I was I thought and we labeled it as impulsive but never did it cross my mind that it was the traits of an addict.

We had a life that most people only dream of. We were happy and went forward through life together and after we got married we talked about having a family so decided to move out of London to my home town. We bought the most amazing house, 5 bedrooms over 3 floors which was brand new and totally beautiful. Everything was perfect.

Within a year it had all changed. We had split up and getting a divorce, the house was up for sale and I was taking cocaine every day.

Chapter Four
Back to Harpenden

At first being back in Harpenden and living in our beautiful home as newly weds made me feel like the luckiest girl in the world and I had to pinch myself sometimes to make sure it was real. It felt great too being close to my friends I grew up with and being able to see them more regularly. They still dabbled in drugs like me but I did not realize until I moved back just how rife cocaine abuse was in Harpenden.

On a night out in Harpenden the majority of people were on cocaine. At that time I was only aware of one or two people who did not take it out of about 50 people in the pub. Not really surprising as Harpenden is full to the brim with millionaires so most people have money to burn. Therefore the so called designer drug is easily affordable and readily available. Getting cocaine in Harpenden is easier than getting a takeaway and there are probably more dealers than there are takeaways. You could make a call and it was delivered to you quicker than a takeaway.

When I first moved back I would go out in Harpenden one week night and one weekend night with my friends and my ex husband would do his own thing and this was totally fine with us both.

On those nights out with my friends sometimes we would buy a gram of coke between us and have a line or two each, only on the weekend. This was enough at first. Before we knew it, it was something we did on the week night too and then at the weekend we would buy two grams between us. Then occasionally at the weekend we would decide to buy a gram each seeing as we stayed out to about 2 or 3am and it would last that night and usually there was a bit left over for the week night. We would have a few drinks and just talk and have a laugh. For me being back in Harpenden made me feel happy so having a few lines amongst good friends just enhanced that. I had that feeling you get when your on holiday all the time so I relaxed and threw caution to the wind and as you do on holiday, I would have that extra drink or another line and go with the flow.

Living back in close proximity with my life long friends also meant we could also meet up impromptu so this started to happen on top of my already allocated one night in the week and weekend night especially if my ex-husband was working late or away on business and then even when he was not and seeing as he was not too keen on my group of friends he never wanted to come out when he was home anyway.

Going out so often I reconnected with people I knew from school or became acquainted with faces I knew who were not close friends before and very quickly my group of friends grew. Everyone liked me and I was seen as a genuine, kind, generous, fun person. I didn't join in

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with any bitching about others and always saw something good in everyone and was upbeat so people enjoyed my company. I was confident, successful, worldly and a bit of a novelty and certainly different to most people I was now associating with.

In a small town if your born and bred there and have never gone away to uni or moved away as I had, it can make you small minded. A lot of these people don't know anyone out of the town, have only ever gone to the same pubs for years, had relationships with the this one or that one or the friend of this one or that one so everyone knows everything about them. I had no history, no dirt, nothing for people to gossip about.

I had lived in Harpenden growing up but had not gone to a Harpenden school so was not a common household name. In my early twenties I had moved to London and lived there 10 years and now I was back and I was unique as I had not slept about in Harpenden so when I was out I did not have a long list of ex's standing in the same bar as me. I felt quite proud about that as it seemed that most people had slept with everyone but sadly not many saw this as a problem and I believe that is because of drugs. It is well known that drugs lower inhibitions and make people more promiscuous so I do think it had become acceptable only because these people had drug issues. Maybe I am just old fashioned but it was something I found quite shocking and really believe that these people only accept it because the drugs have made them that way.

The new group of people I was spending more and more time with were all screwed up due to years of heavy drug abuse but I did not see it at first or maybe I refused to see it as these people did not fit my or most peoples definitions of druggies. They were not down and outs on a material level but they were down and outs on a spiritual and moralistic basis.

I was oblivious to the dangerous path I was on and I was enjoying being liked, accepted, the big fish in a small pond. My ego had got the better of me due to the increasing amount of drugs I was taking. That false ego blinded me so much that I never saw myself go from a recreational cocaine taker to totally dependent.

I was aware I was taking drugs quite often but I was happy doing so and still functioning. Even after being out until the early hours on a week night I was still able to get up for work. Somewhere along the line my ex-husband and I started sleeping in separate rooms, due to my snoring apparently but it suited me just fine as I was then coming home most nights out of my face and did not have to face him.

Before I knew it I was getting home most nights about 2am, would go to my room and if I had any drugs left would carry on taking them which escalated to making sure I always had drugs left to take when I got home even if it meant buying another gram before I went home. It felt exciting as I didn't get any comedowns then and being tired was not a problem as I knew I only had to get through the day and could get more the following night.

I was just going through the motions in my marriage and at work and had emotionally switched off to both and neither my husband or work picked up on this as I acted as I was supposed to act. I was able to deceive myself just as well as I was deceiving them.

My husband and I drifted further and further apart and I do not think either of us noticed or cared too much at first. He was working a lot and away on business a lot so we were hardly spending much time together. Then he started saying about how distant I was and we decided to see our mutual friends more together.

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I remember before one night we had arranged for a group of mutual friends to come over and for us to go out for a meal that I went out the night before with my brother who was visiting us for the weekend. My brother and I went out fully aware the next evening many friends were coming over and had every intention of just having a couple of drinks and going home. We ended up staying out to about 3am and I used him as the excuse to stay out.

We went back to one of his friends houses and decided to take ecstasy. My husband had reluctantly agreed I should stay out with my brother when I phoned after closing time as he had no key but strongly reminded me we had a big night the next night and to be mindful of that. I said what I needed to say to keep him sweet so I could do as I pleased but with every intention of being up for our plans the following night.

My brother and I and his friends took more ecstasy. That evening I was getting on well with one of his friends in particular, a guy I had thought in the past was good looking but never someone I would ever consider in that way or ever get involved with. That night it crossed my mind whether under different circumstances would I maybe have a drunken kiss but I dismissed it as something I would never do or want to do really. This was confirmed in my mind when in the early hours I suggested to my brother we should go home and his friend suggested we all go to his and carry on and it was not even a consideration for me.

My brother and I got a taxi home to mine and enroute realized just how wasted we were. We were tripping like crazy and both threw up as we got out of the taxi. We got in and tried to be quiet but I doubt we were and I have no idea whether my husband heard us or not, probably did but chose to ignore us putting it down to us being drunk and stupid. Luckily it was a big house over three floors so my brother and I headed for the top floor which was practically a self contained flat and so we just vegged up there for hours. We were both expecting that my husband would definitely guess we had taken drugs but the next morning when he woke up and came up to see us, he asked when we got back as had not heard us and only said we both smelt of booze and fags and he went out for a run.

Whilst he was out I had a shower and tried to straighten myself out but I was still tripping and totally wasted and felt sure I would be busted and would have to say something like my drink was spiked. My brother stayed well out of the way but had said if need be he would back up my story. He didn't need to as my husband never said a word. I do not know if he didn't notice or was so naïve about drugs and me taking drugs that he just put it down to me being tired so a little erratic.

I knew I was in no fit state to drive as I was still tripping in and out and had blurred vision but we needed to go to the shops to get bits and pieces for that evening. My husband could not drive so I had no choice. Driving my car out of the garage I scraped it on the wall which he put down to my lack of concentration. I should not have driven, I did not want to drive, I could not see straight and was fully aware how dangerous it was but I had no choice I felt except tell him I was out of it on ecstasy and that was not an option. My driving was terrible but I made out something was wrong with the steering and it was pulling. He bought that story but god knows how I did not kill us or someone else. I was utterly stupid and very lucky.

Still that evening when our friends turned up I felt out of it and had to force myself to eat claiming not to feel too well. The moment they left I just crashed out and did not wake up until lunchtime the next day for which I made an excuse of not feeling well and how I must

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have been coming down with something, hence being so tired and not hungry the night before. I felt that I had got away with it by the skin of my teeth and would not ever push my luck like that again.

The following weekend I was out again with my friends taking cocaine and laughing about it! I had decided though to reign it in a little and be on good behaviour that weekend and not get home later than 2.30am ish.

The Friday night after the pub my friends and I went back to one friends house for a party as per usual with whoever who was out and wanted to party.

One of the guys at the party got a call from his friends and asked the host if they could come along too. The host was reluctant as he did not know them and asked me if I did. I did as one of them was my brothers friend who we had been out with the weekend before so I vouched for them and told the host they would definitely bring cocaine too. They did and the host and myself, of course, got ours for free.

I stuck to my guns though that night and decided to leave at 2ish. Also the coke had run out then and despite my brothers friend telling me more was coming when I was making my plans to leave and it briefly crossing my mind to stay out, I went home, I wanted to go home, I had to. By doing so I was in the good books again and my husband and I got on better in the coming weeks when I came home at a reasonable time.

We were getting on well again, I was happy and he was happy. We still had quite separate lives but also a life together and so it was balanced. In fact I thought we had got it almost perfect despite my friends telling me that that was not the case as we did not have sex often, once a week and it was just routine but I had no desire to cheat although most of my friends were and I put it down to us being together so long and other things in our relationship being more important.

A few months down the line, I bumped into the friend of my brothers again. We had just arrived at the pub when he was leaving. He said they were off to a party and did I want to come. I said take my number and if its any good then let me know as my friends were not too keen. We exchanged numbers and I txt him an hour or so later asking about the party. I was not consciously coming on to him but saw myself as everyone's friends and the one everyone wanted at a party. I thought I was the nuts because my ego was inflated due to cocaine. I wanted him to fancy me and me just be the unattainable top girl. I wanted everyone to see me that way. I felt safe to act that way as I was happily married.

That night I got a taxi without saying bye to my friends and went to meet him as he was with some people who I knew and who also thought I was great and would feed my ego. I was not coming on to him or anyone and just being friendly and they did not see it any other way either but it made me what I wanted to be, the unattainable one. I was playing a dangerous game and playing a part but I was not really aware of it as my ego was running me.

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This guy and me became friends over a period of time and would txt on the odd occasions but never flirting and in my head I felt I was not crossing the line as he was not good enough for me and at best he would be someone who if I was single and very drunk, I may kiss at party in secret then deny it ever happened. He was never someone I would ever consider having a relationship with or someone I would want to fancy but we were in touch and I had instigated most of that.

My husband wanted to come out one evening out of the blue when he was going to be out and although in the past I had had no issue with the thought of my husband joining us, now I did everything to put him off.

Chapter five

I turned my life upside down

I was out one night with this guy and his friends. This guy, the friend of my brother was a small time coke dealer so he took off part way through the night. I was seeing us as friends and acted offended he just left without telling me and when he showed up later at a party we had all gone to, I said he had to make it up to me and we settled on him doing that by taking me out for Sunday lunch.

I instigated it as I knew my husband was away from that weekend for a week in the states but still I was only doing it to feed my ego and was not wanting anything to happen between us but for him to fall for me, again I was not considering anyone but myself and fulfilling the drug fuelled image of how great I was. Part of me even considered telling my husband I had planned to meet one of my brothers friends for lunch as he looked up to me and I wanted to give him some guidance like I was some kind of martyr. He never asked so I never said.

We met for lunch, he did not fall in love with me, lunch was just lunch as friends and I did not like that one bit despite me even looking at him when he first arrived and thinking I definitely did not fancy him. I was so full of myself due to drugs yet so eroded of self esteem too due to drugs, when he said he was off after we ate lunch and asked me to drop him off at his friends, I actually cried after and instigated us txtng over the rest of the afternoon.

Later that evening he came back to mine, his van was parked in my road so had to but he was playing the game better than me. He wanted to come back but all afternoon he was happy to use me as something to show off to his mates about, to feed his ego to make up for his drug eroded self esteem. I was unaware of this completely. To me he was clearly deep down in love with me but of course had to be a lad in front of his friends.

That evening at mine we took loads of coke, talked and talked but I was still doing this in the disguise of seeing him as a friend but he saw through that and made a move after some cheesy Line about the lipbalm I had just put on. Does that taste of anything is what he said and kissed me. It did take me by surprise as I had never cheated on my husband but I liked it, I loved it. I had never enjoyed a kiss so much so after about a minute of taking stock, I kissed him back and didn't want to stop. My marriage was over in my head from that moment on.

We kissed and kissed and one thing led to another. We were all over each other and I wanted it and felt no guilt and despite not knowing if anything would come of this new encounter, I knew the life I had was over and something inside me had been awakened. I had not been turned on or so uninhibited ever before. I don't know if it was the drugs in hindsight making me feel that way or did I question that for a very long time, still now I don't know. Maybe I don't want to believe that.

TBC

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Chapter six

The darkness set in

When exactly the fun ended and my life turned to hell is hard to pinpoint. It happened so quickly. One minute I was the life and soul of the party, people always around me and liked, admired and respected but that was probably just me being delusional, but all of a sudden it was gone.

I was still seeing the one I thought was the love of my life and I thought he felt that way too, especially when I was with him despite him being unreliable, letting me down all the time and acted like he did not care in front of his friends and never really invited me out but when we were together I had no doubt in my mind he did love me really but was just acting that way as he was frightened of being hurt and just a little lost. I thought he was playing little games to test me when he would not see me for days on end so I started to say I was busy too on the odd day he seemed to want to see me and would suggest the day after thinking this would snap him out of being frightened and take the plunge with me. I was sure I saw how much he loved me in his eyes so trusted him and thought we were both just playing a few games but that was normal in the early days of a relationship and it would sort itself out in time.

It never occurred to me that his behaviour could have been due to him being a drug addict but it never occurred to me that my own behaviour was affected by drugs either. I was deluding myself and made allowances for his behaviour and thought the best way to handle it was to make him feel special and secure and safe with me. I just gave everything, the perfect girlfriend, the one he could rely on and the one to save him.

In the early days he had mentioned he had a close female friend who clearly meant a lot to him. He had been honest and told me that things had gone on between them in the past but it was not like that anymore, although occasionally still if they are both drunk and single they have had a drunken kiss and fumble but it was nothing more than that and certainly not something that would happen if he was now with me. I felt he had been more honest than he needed to be so did not feel threatened. He had also said how their friendship had been a problem for past girlfriends and how glad he was he could be so honest about it to me and how he wanted me to meet her at some point. I felt privileged.

At the beginning he only mentioned her occasionally and it did not seem they were meeting up that often so I was under the impression they only hooked up every few weeks if that and not something that worried me or should have been a problem to any of his past girlfriends. In the coming months after he hardly mentioned her and I presumed they had not seen each other. I asked at first and he said she was busy studying exams and he was spending time with me so they just had not made time but not a problem and it had sometimes gone that way over the years.

One day about 5/6 months into our relationship, he mentioned her birthday was coming up in a few weeks and she was having a party so he would catch up with her then and looking forward to it as it had been a while. He asked me if I would like to go with him a couple of days later. At first I said I would love to but if after not seeing her for so long he would prefer

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to go to the party alone and spend time with his friends without having to worry about me then I was ok with that but he insisted he wanted me to go and to meet her.

It was not mentioned again until a few days before when I mentioned that a mutual friend I had seen was going too and had asked if she could go with us which seemed like a good idea to me so I would have someone to talk to if he wanted to spend time with his friends. I was looking forward to it.

I never told him straight away that when I had said to the mutual friend I was very much looking forward to meeting his close friend that she had said a strange thing. This friend had told me to be careful and not to trust this friend of his as she will not like it if she thinks I am taking his attention away from her and she has my boyfriend wrapped around her little finger and she would no doubt play on it at her party. When I asked if she was trying to warn me and was I missing something she said I just needed to be mindful this girl had a hold over my boyfriend but he doesn't see it so he will always be protective of her if anyone says a bad word against her and she knows it so tread carefully. I was not sure if her opinion was born out of her own jealousy that he was fonder of another female friend than he was her.

I decided to mention it to him later and I even said it was a strange thing for her to say and only mentioned it as had to ask him why he thought this friend would feel the need to warn me and did he think I had anything to worry about. He said he did not understand why and some people find it hard to accept they are just friends as they are close. I asked if his friend knew I was going with him to her party and he said she did and was looking forward to meeting me. He assured me she was not like she had been made out to be and the only reason he could think why someone would say that was because his past girlfriends had not liked her. I dismissed it and said I would make up my own mind after meeting her and would not allow others to cloud my judgement. Of course I had my reservations and wondered what was it about this friend that his ex girlfriends and now a female friend were so threatened by but I kept it to myself.

On the day of the party he said he was not going to go as he felt too tired. I was not intending on going but last minute the mutual friend insisted I go with her still, she was very persistent and suggested I go for one drink at the very least with her as it was not a private party and otherwise she would have to walk into the pub on her own. I conceded as part of me was intrigued to meet his friend the birthday girl. I told him I was going for one drink last minute and even tried to persuade him to come along just for one drink too but he was adamant he would not come too.

When we walked in the pub she was already drunk and we chatted a little, her saying good to meet me, how she is not a threat and how his other girlfriends had not liked her as they felt threatened and did not like how close her and he were. I told her I did not see her as a threat but she kept repeating herself. I apologized that he was not coming but she insisted he would definitely come and she had no doubt about that. I knew he was definitely not coming as half an hour earlier that's what he had told me and would not even consider coming for one drink.

An hour or so later he showed up, he had not rang or txt me to say he was coming. He acknowledged me when he walked in and I was surprised to see him as he was so tired he was going home and straight to bed he told me and yet here he was showered and changed but only staying for one drink, 20 mins or so.

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He made his way over to the bar where the birthday girl was and then stood there for the next 20 mins with her arms draped around his neck and although he looked uncomfortable and a little awkward about it with me being there, his arms were loosely around her waist but still they remained like that and just spoke to each other for the whole time. They looked like a couple and I was so shocked and irritated I had to face the other way in the end. The friend I was with said don't worry about it as she is always like that when she is drunk. It showed total disrespect from both of them and at that moment I could understand why no ex girlfriends liked her.

When they both eventually joined the rest of us, she had a card he had made her out of a sheet of paper which she was happy to show me. Inside it said Happy Birthday Babe, but he had signed it off with "Love Forever" followed by his name and many kisses with a gram of coke inside. It made my blood run cold as over the 6 months together he had never put more than love from.

I kept my cool and when he left I walked him out and calmly said I had felt a little uncomfortable with what he had written and her standing with her arms around his neck after meeting me for the first time and why didn't he politely pull away and he snapped at me and said what did I want him to do, offend her? Instead he was happy to offend me and make it difficult for me to like her. I felt uneasy about how they are together when I am not there if that's how they are in front of me and he signs off with love forever, telling me it means nothing yet had never signed off using those words to me.

That was the start of my paranoia. Instead of walk away, I constantly obsessed about their relationship. He told me it was all in my head and I did not know if it was or was not.

To escape from the constant obsessing and thinking I took more and more drugs to block it out and it worked for a while but after months it consumed me and I could think of nothing else and I spoke of nothing else. Paranoid and delusional and my thinking and theories were so far fetched that even if there was more to their friendship, noone would consider it seriously and when he lied most sympathized with him that he had no choice and she was seen as a victim of my obsessive behaviour.

I did not know if it was all in my head. I would think that for a while and try to make amends and go around telling everyone how sorry I was, Then something would happen such as him tell me a lie and it would trigger off me believing it was not in my head and I was right all along and would go around telling everyone I know it was not in my head.

It was an endless cycle of torture and I had nothing left inside to break it. I had no credibility with others so I could not trust anyone. I did not trust myself. I had no self respect or dignity, no energy, no motivation or purpose and no support. I knew I was acting like a nutcase and that everyone saw me as a nutcase but I did not know what to do to change it or who to turn to so I cut myself off and just turned to drugs full time.

Day after day I just took drugs, all day everyday and never left the house usually confined to one room. I would sit in one room for up to 5 days and nights solid until I eventually ran out of drugs or just collapsed from exhaustion. I would then sleep for a few days solid and not know what day it was when I did wake up and then do it all over again. I would wake up feeling anxious and in a panic and couldn't bear feeling that way so would order more drugs within an hour max. When I woke up and it was dark outside I was distraught in case it was a

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time between 4-6 am when it was harder to get drugs. I usually did still get them but there was not so many options and I would have to pay sometimes double to convince the dealer it was worth while him getting up and delivering them.

All those so called friends I had just left me to it as they were so sick of my constant obsessing and paranoia and by now I was not willing to give away drugs like I had done so there was nothing in it for them. Even those people who needed somewhere to go to take drugs stopped coming and would rather go anywhere but to mine.

I even stopped seeing the drug dealers face to face and at first would leave the cash under the mat and asked them to put the drugs through the letterbox as I had to go out or would be in the bath. When I was too paranoid to go to the cash machine, I started leaving my bank card under the mat and all the dealers knew my pin number. I suspected they would take more money than the cost of drugs and normally they took an extra 50 at least, some would take a few hundred and sometimes I mentioned it but mostly I did not. Only mentioned it if I needed them to bring me drugs at an unsociable time.

On many occasions I gave the dealers the money they needed to buy their weeks supply so they would get it quicker and I would say they could pay me back when they had sold the rest but it usually ended up with me taking more drugs instead of the cash so they were making a lot of money from me. I would give them the money, they would get the drugs at half the price and sell them to me at full price. Every 800 I gave them was worth 1600 to them.

Most days by now I was spending 300 a day on cocaine, sometimes more but rarely less. The odd dealer would sometimes develop a conscience and would say no more that day but I knew enough dealers that I could rotate them. Most of the time at this stage I was getting as much as I could from each dealer, 300 worth from each one so I could be left in peace for days on end without having to contact them daily as by then having to leave my card under mat was too much of a chore and having to wait 20 mins or so for the drugs to be put through the letterbox was too stressful.

I would stock up in one go buying 1 or 2000 pounds worth of cocaine then sit in my bedroom in near darkness, curtains closed day and night for days and days on end torturing my mind, writing pages and pages about conversations I had had with my boyfriend, recalling every detail of what he had said, where he said he was, who he was with then comparing it to what other people had said and cross referencing it to dates and times and any facebook entries made by them or others at those times. I would try and recall in detail everything, even facial expressions and whether their actions and words matched their body language, using the internet to research what certain actions meant and what people would do and say in certain situations. I wanted clarity about whether I was insane or whether I was right to think something was going on between my boyfriend and his female friend.

I would think I had found the answer and everything would fit it perfectly. I would be certain they were cheating and it all made sense and either his friends were all in on it or he was such a good liar he had fooled everyone else too. Other times I thought he was not cheating but his actions were because he was a pycopath. I was so sure I even txt him saying so giving examples of what he had done and how he acts and the exact definitions of a pycopath his actions matched.

I had no concept of time and whether it was day or night so often would call, txt, facebook him, her, his friends, my friends with my revelations which a few days later would be

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different again. Of course everyone thought I was just nuts and turned against me. I do understand this but at the time I also felt heartbroken that not one person, not even him could see the mess I was in and the pain I was going through and how the drugs had and still were destroying me and the dangerous place I was in. Instead they made me feel more isolated and more that they were conspiring against me when I was rockbottom.

I knew I was in a mess but maybe not just how bad a mess but I remember thinking even then that if one of them was in the mess I was and acting the way I was, I would have known there had to be a reason for it and would have tried to help them. Instead they all turned against me and attacked me like a pack of wolves. I still today do not think I could have done the same in their shoes.

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Chapter 7

Hell

I was in unbearable pain emotionally and physically, totally alone and despised by everyone including myself so I took more drugs to relieve the pain but I always ended up back in the same pain and it worsened everytime.

I had a way out but I tried to put it to the back of my mind but it was the only way out I could see and it kept calling me. I had only one reason to fight it, my brother.

My brother in his low times had also seen suicide as the only escape and the pain that caused me when he did try and the days of not knowing if he would pull through was the only thing stopping me from doing it now. I knew if he had succeeded I would have never got over it and I could not put him or my family through that pain but I could not bear my own pain I was in any longer

I eventually managed to convince myself he would understand and I wrote him a letter to explain.

The thought of suicide to me by then was not a sad or desolate one but an excitement that finally the pain could end. I felt relief and a sense of calm that it was my destiny. The end of all this unbearable pain. Every part of me felt it was the right thing to do. Finally I had found what I had been searching for and how it would effect anyone else was not even a consideration now. For the first time in a very long time I was motivated and no longer frightened or scared of what might be.

I took 30 anti depressants, 20 or so paracetamol and washed them down with a bottle of wine and half a bottle of baileys. This was on top of days and days of cocaine, no sleep and no food. I do not even know what day it was or the time, I did not care as for the first time in a long time I felt nothing but extreme peace.

I just lied down, I had Elvis playing and I slipped into a semi conscious state thinking peaceful thoughts that finally I had found my purpose and I would no longer burden anyone else and above all I was going to be free of the pain. It was bliss.

It seemed like hours passed with me drifting in and out of consciousness and I was not dead yet, I felt I was getting close then I would be back in the room again. Out of nowhere my brothers words from years ago came in my head. How he was so grateful to me for helping him through the years. I tried to block them out as I knew if I dwelled on them I would start to feel guilty for what I had done. I had a bottle of champagne to hand and another 10 or so paracetomals so I took them and downed the champagne. I could not shake my thoughts and had a moment of regret where I panicked and called 999 but as soon as requested ambulance service I came to my senses and put the phone down.

It was too late for me now, it was done and I was going in and out of consciousness.

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I came round god knows how long after still alive in my bed and surrounded by police and ambulance staff. I was barely conscious but could hear muffled voices and their radios.

I must have lost consciousness as the next time I was back again I was strapped in a stretcher with a lady holding my hand saying please stay with me, squeeze my hand if you can hear me.

I woke up in a hospital bed wired to machines that were beeping and I remember feeling some pain in my heart and it did not matter to me as it had to be too late for them to do anything to save me now and I felt happy about that.

I did wake up a day or so after and when I got my bearings, I realized I was alive so had failed. I was sunken and just cried and cried and cried.

The doctor came and said I was lucky to be alive but there was some problem with my heart so would have to stay there for a while. The nurse asked how I was feeling and was there a next of kin or anyone they should call. There was no one I wanted them to call. I did not feel lucky either. I did not even speak, I just stared into space and cried.

More doctors came and went, nurses came and went, a psychiatrist came and went but I said nothing. I had nothing to say. I just wanted them all to leave me alone. I was totally drained of all emotion and had no strength, no words, no thoughts, no nothing.

Later that day or another day there was a friend at my bedside. She had gone to my house and found the door had been forced open and no sign of me but my keys, bag, phone and all were there so she called the police and found out what had happened. I just cried again and told her I wanted to go home and said nothing else. She said I could not go home as my heart may be damaged. She also told me she had called my boyfriend but he said he was working and she thought he had only acted that way as he was probably in shock but she expected he would want to be with me once it had sunk in. He did not come. When I was allowed to go home he came to pick me up but it seems that was because my friend had put her foot down and said she was not able to as she still believed he was in shock and to make him have to collect me she thought may be what was required to snap him out of it. I did not know that until after.

After being home for a couple of days, I felt better and said all the right things like I had learned my lesson, I wouldn't do that again, I realize how lucky I am to be alive, I will not take cocaine again as it would be too dangerous after damaging my heart last time. I said the words and was happy to go along with it but deep inside I knew I had no intention of stopping the drugs but thought it best to give it a week or so for everything to settle down and to recover and build up my strength.

I did not take drugs for about two weeks but not by choice. It was clear when I tested the water with friends by saying lets have a line or two that they were horrified so I pretended I was joking. I was not. After a couple of weeks what had happened was a distant memory, yesterdays news and I had done such a good job convincing everyone how I never want to be in that rut again, How I didn't even like doing the level of drugs I had been and I only did as I was unhappy but now I realize this and can control it. I only wanted to do the odd line now and then. I can take it or leave it now. I hadn't missed it. I even started convincing myself that it was actually the truth.

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To prove the point to everyone, the first time I did it again after those weeks I only had a couple of lines and refused anymore saying I had had enough and happy to leave it there. Partly this was because I was a little apprehensive about whether my heart could take it but mainly I didn't want to go crazy the first few times and run the risk of people thinking I had no control and them scrutinizing me and watching me too closely and stopping me having it again in the future.

Before long noone took any notice and months went by and my heart problem was buried along with everything else. I was again taking a lot of drugs and pretty much on a daily basis again but I was careful not to let people know. Even saying some nights that I was having a night in as wanted an early night then getting drugs and doing them and pretending the next day I really had an early night.

I rotated dealers so each of them thought I was only having a gram every few days and led each of them to believe that they were the only one I bought drugs from as I trusted them not to let me lose control again and I knew their gear was safe.

Everyone thought I was doing a few grams no more than three times a week. Still a lot by most peoples standards (normal people) but my acquaintances were all drug addicts and did drugs a few times a week so noone thought it was a problem as that's what everyone else did. I am sure many of them were lying and doing more just like me but with cocaine, noone wants to be the worst or be seen to have a problem. Everyone measures themselves against how much others do and that sets the standard of it being acceptable. While there is someone else doing more than you, you don't have a problem.

Within months I was back to a minimum of three grams a day and not hiding it as well as I thought. When people started to cotton on, I had plenty of excuses. Despite me hitting it hard for months before, It was only around the end of November when it came to light so I had an excuse for it. It was my birthday and I was going to hit it hard just for that and the run up to Christmas as come January I was knocking it all on the head. That really was my intention. I thought if I went crazy and partied hard until January, I would get it out of my system.

It was time for me to change my life before I ended up too far down the line to do it. I had had a few years of hitting it hard but somewhere deep inside I knew it wasn't the life I wanted to live. I wanted my dreams back, I wanted myself back.

Christmas day came and I had nowhere to go because I hadn't bothered to sort anything. Part of me did not want to do anything and part of me enjoyed reveling in the self pity of being alone at Christmas. I never even got dressed and just took drugs all day but a part of me knew I couldn't go much lower, I didn't want to go any lower than spending Christmas day alone taking drugs. It was all going to change come January I promised myself so that took the edge off how low I felt spending Christmas day alone taking drugs!

I spent New Years Eve with friends, lapping up the sympathy for being alone at Christmas, them saying I should have told them I had nowhere to go so I could have spent it with them. I told them all after that night that I was stopping drugs and sorting my life out. I believed it and I wanted it to be the truth.

New years eve went on for 3 days solid. I spent over Fifteen hundred pounds just sitting around a friends flat with a handful of people taking drugs and drinking. It was my final blow

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out after all so I was going out in style. I felt so rough after that I slept it off for two days but that was two days without drugs so I was off and running. The next day I was tempted but I was strong and never crumbled. I was doing well, 3 days without drugs. It was immaterial that I had slept for two of them.

The day after I was back on it again telling myself that it was the last time and the next day I was never doing it again. It was going to be a one off.... Half way through January I was still doing it and I was disgusted with myself.

I thought at this point maybe I had a problem so I searched the internet looking for the signs of cocaine addiction. I don't know if I wanted it confirmed or discounted. I took a few online tests and the first one I lied on about just how much cocaine I was doing but it still came back with the result being I had a problem. The test I finally took where I was being honest just smacked me right between the eyes. I was a severe, chronic cocaine addict and needed immediate help. I did another test where I was more honest than the first test but less honest than the last one. I was still a chronic drug addict who needed immediate help.

Over the next few days, I kept going back to the tests as I couldn't quite believe it. I looked up definitions of the various levels of drug addiction hoping to discount the tests and find evidence the tests were airing on the side of caution. I could not find anything telling me I did not have a problem. There was a number to call that offered support 24 hours a day and stated it could be done anonymously so I called it.

I told the person at the end of the phone the whole truth. The questions he asked were worded in a way that I knew this guy totally understood everything and that my thoughts, feelings and actions were nothing new to him no matter how disjointed and crazy it all sounded. Nothing shocked him and he could relate to everything as he had been through it all and he was open and honest about his experiences.

I was on the phone for nearly two hours, I cried, I laughed, I got angry, I cringed, but I told him everything. He told me I needed help urgently and I should come to a rehab clinic straight away. I argued over and over that I was not that bad. Eventually I allowed him to tell me more about rehab and said I would consider it as I trusted him and maybe a week away wouldnt hurt.

He played hardball with me at that point and told me unless I came to rehab, I would be dead in months, even weeks. I said ok I would think about coming for a week but he made it clear that one week in rehab was not an option and I would need to stay in rehab for at least three months. That was not an option for me but it made me panic that this guy who knew more about this than me and I knew I could trust was telling me my options were carry on and be dead in months or go to rehab for 3 months. I still couldn't commit to three months so we settled for a month.

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He wanted me to come in straight away and would even send a car to get me but I said I needed a day to sort things out first. He told me that if I left it, I would find a way of talking myself out of it but I promised I would not do that. When he called the next day, I ignored the call but he persisted so I agreed I would come the next day and he booked me in but when the admissions team called to confirm it all I pretended he had told me I was booked in the day after tomorrow as it was not possible for me to be there tomorrow as my boyfriend was working away and only back that day. They knew I was lying so I agreed to pay the 6000 fee upfront to show my commitment but that was not me committing. That was me getting them off my back and I was happy to lose 6000 to do it.

That night I got off my face again and managed to talk myself out of going as my problem was not that extreme that I needed rehab. I knew deep down that I needed help in some shape or form but not a month in rehab. I even convinced myself that I wanted to carry on living my life on drugs and accepted if I die I die! What would be would be!

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Chapter 8; Going to Rehab

The morning came and I was going to rehab. I was full of fear and still searching for every excuse not to go. I wasn't a proper drug addict, I was a fraud. However in the end I thought I would go but just for a few days as I needed some time away to rest and this place was probably going to be more like a health farm and spa afterall.

I felt nervous on the journey and although I was not totally convinced I needed rehab, I was happy to accept that a few days away being pampered would not be a bad thing. I was getting my own luxury apartment, would have access to gym and spa facilities and healthy food. There would be Doctors and counselors on hand if I fancied it and maybe even a celebrity or two.

I had to go as it would also make my boyfriend and his friends who had been so vile to me feel guilty as well as all those people who should have done more to help when I was suffering. How could anyone slate me now and treat me badly as I was going to rehab.

My boyfriend surely now would feel terrible and have to take the blame for letting me go so low that I needed a month in rehab, 3 months in rehab.

I was wallowing in self pity as well as a sod them all attitude. "Well that will teach them all! That will make them feel tremendous guilt for causing me so much hurt that I got so low! That will excuse all my crazy behaviour and they will all owe me so many apologies"! Yes this wasn't going to be a bad thing.

I was frightened to death in all honesty. I even started to worry that after a few days rest the clinic would no doubt see I didn't have a problem and send me home but I couldn't go home otherwise all these people who hurt me wouldn't feel bad then so I thought of my back up plan. First option was to go on holiday and tell people I transferred to a rehab clinic abroad. Yes when the clinic I was on the way to said I could leave after a few days, I would go abroad for 2 or 3 weeks. The last option was I would have to hide out at my house for a few weeks.

It had not even occurred to me that the clinic would expect me to stay the whole month. I could probably convince them I needed to stay a week at most but I wasn't a proper druggie and they would see that.

When we arrived and checked in", I was shown to my apartment which was as nice as I had imagined. I was handed a book called Alcoholics Anonymous which I instantly dismissed and made a point of letting them know they had made a mistake as I had no problem with alcohol and I hardly drank so I tossed it to one side. Clearly they had got my notes mixed up somehow and I would sort it the next day.

I was asked if I had any drugs or alcohol on me! I practically laughed in their face! Of course I didn't, I was there for a rest! Nevertheless they politely asked to go through my things,

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although a little insulted, I did not object as I had nothing to hide. They had to check I thought as real druggies came here after all.

I had brought mouthwash with me but they informed me they had to confiscate it as it contained alcohol. I was actually amused by this! They seemed to think I had a problem with alcohol and this problem was going to make me drink mouthwash! Really!

I knew for certain then I wasn't going to fit in and didn't need to be there as this place was for alkie. I told them I was there for a rest and to cut down on cocaine but I had no problem with alcohol and not really a problem with cocaine but was happy to stay a week to have a rest.

They took my phone off me, my purse, and my bank cards (after washing them as they had cocaine stuck in the digits). I found it all a bit over the top! I gave my current account card to my boyfriend as clearly these freaks couldn't be trusted!

I was told I was required to give a urine sample and was glad that my boyfriend had to leave then as clearly once I did the urine sample they would say your problem isn't as bad as we thought, you can go in a few days. I didn't want him to hear that otherwise he wouldn't feel sorry for me.

I had no need to worry it turned out as my tests came back with dangerously high levels of cocaine in my system and to my surprise also high levels of alcohol, high levels of marijuana and high levels of amphetamines. Either they had mixed up my test with someone else or their test was faulty but I wasn't going to argue as it would buy me a few days there to rest before the mistake was noticed.

I was all set up to relax now and go back to my apartment, have a nice long bath, watch some TV and have an early night when I was told we were all going to an AA meeting in 10 mins. Seeing it wasn't applicable to me and I was tired I said I was just going to turn in and thought it best I didn't come. It was made pretty clear to me that I was going in a non aggressive way so rather than rock the boat I decided to let them have it their way this once and tomorrow I could do my own thing and chill.

Everyone at the meeting seemed too nice and it was surreal so I decided to play along but I wouldn't get sucked in by these people. There were about 30 people at the meeting, all different ages and from all walks of life but all too calm, nice and caring that I wondered if I had been expected to be duped into joining some cult but I was too clever and aware to fall for that so I was content to go along with it for now.

The meeting started with different people reading extracts about alcoholics and mentioned god more times than I was comfortable with. These people were clearly weak as religion was for weak people who couldn't make their own decisions without deceiving themselves that god was making it for them so if they made the wrong choice they could blame god and not take responsibility for their own actions.

I remember feeling saddened that if I had a real problem with alcohol and came here as a last resort for help then I would feel sunken and realize no one could help and just give up, I was lucky I wasn't in need of real help.

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We all then had to say our name followed by alcoholic, addict and some said both. I asked the person next to me what I should say as I was neither of those. He said that seeing as it was an AA meeting he would say alcoholic and at a CA meeting he says addict so I did what he did.

Tammy.... Alcoholic! I muttered then shrugged it off and sat there and half listened to the person they called the chair as they started to talk. Here we go, more brainwashing happy clappy crap I thought. I found myself listening quite intensely.

What was said I thought was probably quite honest, maybe embellished in some parts to tell a good story but he believed what he was saying and I was struck by how he wasn't afraid to say things that most people would not be that open about which I found refreshing as I was that way so I felt some comfort that for a short time I would be in the company of these people, I was not going to be persecuted or judged for talking frankly which had seemed to land me in hot water of late which I never understood as it was just my nature and how I had always been but lately I was disliked for it.

I was glad I could show empathy to the alcoholic speaker and his story and very glad that I didn't have a problem like that.

The meeting ended with us all holding hands and saying the serenity prayer;
God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

I was so uncomfortable with having to hold hands and cringing as we prayed and struggled to say the word god which was made so much worse by everyone insisting on saying it with pride.

On the way home I was asked by one of the guys from the clinic what I thought. I was honest and to my surprise, he said he felt exactly the same about it all at first. He told me that god can be anything you choose outside of yourself and he had not chosen exactly what that was to him yet but for now he used an acronym for God being Group of druggies so I decided I would use that too for now.

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Chapter nine Life in rehab

The next morning and the days thereafter started before 9am and were intense.

Typically it started with group meditation followed by picking two words from the wall chart to describe how you felt. Hours of group counseling, one to one counseling, studying the big book, art therapy, music therapy, lessons in nutrition, gym sessions twice a week, a meeting every night at CA or AA. Every day though without fail was spent with 5 hours of group therapy talking about the two words you was feeling that day.

The words on the chart covered the full range of possible emotions from angry, fearful, irritable, empathy, joyful, peaceful, calm and some I didn't know what they meant. Pretty straightforward you would think but initially it took some time to decide how you felt even with a wall full of words to choose from.

I thought I was in tune with my feelings but it was clear that wasn't the case. I tended to say what I thought I should feel and not what I felt. I was usually grateful to be there and enthusiastic with the occasional apprehensive dropped in as that is how I thought I felt or should feel. The problem being I wasn't feeling just thinking.

I avoided the words I saw as negative or bad such as angry, depressed, gloomy and wouldn't allow myself to feel those things or just denied it to myself and others if I did feel that way. I didn't like negative emotions in others so who would like me if I displayed them.

In the first few days of being in rehab, I was asked to write my life story. The requirement was to write a minimum of 1000 words being as honest and thorough as you can without trying to rationalize it and without holding back as noone else would ever see it except your counselor. They said just let it flow without thinking about it and then don't read it back or change it. Easy I thought as how hard can it be to write about your life as afterall you have lived it and know it better than anyone. Its not as easy as you may think to be brutally honest about how it really is and resisting the temptation to fool yourself into what you want it to be or without it focusing on other people and events and not just your own thoughts, feelings and experience.

It was handed in to my counselor in the first few days and not mentioned again but without warning within the first few weeks, it was handed back to me again at the start of a group counseling session and I was asked to read it out in front of the group word for word without making any other comments or trying to justify it. The counselor then asked each member of the group to give honest feedback about how it made them feel, what they related to without judgement. Not until everyone had commented was I able to say anything. The counselor then asked me to say how I felt when I read it out and how the feedback had made me feel and to say nothing more than the feelings.

It opened my eyes. I was the one who had lived that life that I had written about but until I had read it out loud to others weeks later, heard their feedback and feelings about it, only then did it scream out to me the patterns, characteristics and all the underlying traits that were now

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so apparent throughout my life. I was an addict. There was no way I could deny it anymore as the truth was in black and white written by me. I just hadn't joined the dots until then.

Up until that point I was in denial of the severity of my addiction and that it had been present throughout my entire life.

For the first time I admitted to myself and others I was an addict. I was not in control and powerless over drugs and my life had become unmanageable.

I had finally faced the truth. I had a chronic cocaine addiction.

I should have known sooner as my drug tests that were carried out daily had already confirmed the dangerous levels of drugs that were in my system from the day I got there and were still showing as positive for cocaine 8 days later when for those who abuse cocaine its usually clear within 3-5 days. Knowing that I still denied I had a problem.

I came to accept at that moment that I had the disease of addiction for which there is no cure. It is an illness of the body and a malady of the mind and is more cunning and baffling than any other illness known to man.

Everyone in the group, all the counselors, the tests, my life story, being in rehab, the meetings all confirmed I was an addict but it wasn't until nearly two weeks later did I actually see and believe it myself. I knew then I was in the right place and I felt frightened to death and any desire to leave left me.

Those first few weeks in rehab there is no contact with the outside world, noone can visit you, they take your phone and all day, every night for seven days a week you are together as a group being stripped back and laid bare. There is nowhere to hide. You have to face your fears, learn to deal with your raw emotions and be true to yourself to survive.

I now knew I had a problem and I was prepared to go through anything now to beat it. I didn't want to be a drug addict and was prepared to do what it took to get better. I didn't want to take drugs again as I felt my life now made sense and had meaning.

After weeks of being in rehab, I was allowed a visit from my boyfriend on a Sunday afternoon and allowed to go out for a few hours. We went to lunch and I had no desire to drink or take drugs but within an hour or so, I felt tempted as I knew he had drugs in the car and at that point I considered not going back to the clinic and going on a bender. This was despite now knowing I was an addict and knowing there was a solution and knowing that was what I wanted more than anything as I hated my life on drugs and knew it would kill me yet still it took all my strength to abstain. I didn't feel good for abstaining, I felt depressed and irritable and resentful that I had chosen to go back to the clinic.

It took days for me to come to terms with the fact that even once you do finally surrender and know you are powerless over addiction, it will never leave you and will plant that seed of doubt and screw your head up at every opportunity. I questioned whether living with that hanging over me was better than living as a practicing drug addict.

However another couple of weeks in the clinic with 5 hours a day of counseling made me strong again and sure that a life without drugs was what I wanted.

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Chapter ten Coming out

A month had past. I felt great, looked great and was finally at peace inside.

I was sad to leave rehab as I had made wonderful friends with whom I had laughed and cried and had connected with on a deep level. I had seen their fears, strengths and weaknesses and they had seen mine.

I was ready to go home but just as nervous about that as I was going there but more aware of how and why I felt that way.

My boyfriend was collecting me. He was late but I had the peace and rationale within me to see it as nothing more than he had been held up and it wasn't personal. Yes I would not have been late in this situation but we were where we were.

I was quiet on the way home and feeling apprehensive but in a healthy way. I had been away for over a month and in that time my whole way of being had changed. I was content reflecting on that. I liked who I was now, I didn't want or need drugs. I was fully aware of the potential dangers and what I needed to do and avoid to stay clean and serene. I was in the best place mentally and physically that I had ever been.

My boyfriend reassured me that his mum had been round to clean my flat and had removed any reminders of drugs. They would be no rolled up notes, straws or empty wraps. I felt pleased I could walk into that place again which before rehab had become my prison and had more resemblance to Ms Havershams' house from Great Expectations than a home to me.

When we got home, I was a little disappointed. It was reasonably tidy but not clean. I didn't let it get me down and still showed gratitude as after all showing gratitude was crucial in my recovery.

It was hard to remain grateful and stop the feelings of irritation setting in when I couldn't find my things. Glasses and crockery had been moved, no towels or tea towels because his mum had taken them away to wash apparently but they never reappeared. Furniture had been rearranged, electrical goods were plugged in different sockets, TV and dvd were not connected properly, my bedroom had been rearranged.

I felt I was being a nuisance when I rang my boyfriend to ask where something was. Eventually I lost my cool as I felt uncomfortable in my own home. I was quickly made to feel guilty though as his mum was only trying to help and had gone out of her way to clean the flat. I didn't hold back then as it was pretty clear the flat hadn't been cleaned.

I didn't open my post for a few days but when I did, I noticed on my bank statement that 800 pounds had been withdrawn from my account when I was in rehab so I could not have taken it. I mentioned it to him and it didn't cross my mind that he may have taken it. A day later after I called the bank he admitted that he had taken it as he was desperate as needed the money for the deposit on a new flat. He felt bad apparently but had no other choice and then

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didn't know how to tell me but intended to pay me back. I would have lent it to him if he had asked but just to take it and not even tell me was pretty low.

I had been told in rehab that any people or friends I used to associate with who continued to use drugs were best avoided for the first 12 months of recovery. Obviously the counselors knew that my boyfriend was a drug user and so asked him to come in and have a joint counseling session with me. They needed to be completely sure that he fully understood that if he was to continue taking drugs then they had advised me strongly to end the relationship as my recovery would be severely jeopardized and I would almost certainly relapse and the illness or addiction I had could kill me.

He had said when he had visited me in rehab that he was done with drugs and no longer enjoyed them and now I was clean, he knew we had an opportunity to change our lives and both be drug free. The drugs had caused him nothing but grief and had cost him dearly. He owed about 10000 to a drug dealer and this had got him into dealing as he had no other way to pay it back so he would have no choice but to continue dealing for now but just wouldn't do it. He wanted out of dealing and he wanted out of drugs.

He repeated this in the counseling session and said that he was happy to give up drugs rather than lose me. He explained he wasn't an addict and could take or leave cocaine but the weed would be harder to stop but he would stop cocaine that day. The counselor was pretty convinced and satisfied he would not pose a risk to my recovery and he seemed in fact very supportive and willing to stop taking cocaine which seeing as he didn't have a problem with it, it would be easy for him. I felt on top of the world that he was going to do this for us and was looking forward to a happy drug free future together.

Within a week of me leaving rehab, I was in the flow of it and going to CA meetings. He was in the flow of it and while I attended my meetings, he was taking cocaine.

He was still dealing of course so often had it on him and would even sell it in front of me and drop it off to friends with me in the car. I felt strong and wasn't in the slightest bit tempted but I was uneasy and not comfortable being pulled back into that lifestyle. I had nothing in common with these people anymore and no desire to spend time with them.

I thought we were supposed to be breaking away from that life and he was fully aware that the clinic had made it perfectly clear that it was too dangerous for me to be around drugs and drugs users and that would include him and I would have to end the relationship as I was a drug addict and it was a matter of life and death for me.

He didn't see the problem if he didn't actually take drugs in front of me. He was doing less cocaine but he was still doing it which of course caused rows after a while with me constantly reminding him what he had promised and that I would have to walk away from the relationship as a recovering addict cannot have a boyfriend you uses drugs . He would say he would not do it again, how selfish he had been and it was wrong and unfair of him to put me in that position.

This cycle continued and he would say he wouldn't do it if he wasn't around it all the time and didn't want to do it but as he had to deal cocaine to pay the huge debt he had run up with his supplier he had it all the time so it was too easy to have the odd line. He couldn't see a

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way out and hated putting me in that situation and would do anything to get out of that lifestyle but until he had paid the debt we were trapped.

I knew I couldn't stay in that lifestyle much longer as the risk of me relapsing was too high as sooner or later I would give in to temptation. You wouldn't work in a pub if you was an alcoholic and a food addict wouldn't go to the cake shop every day. You wouldn't hang out with prostitutes if you was a sex addict and you wouldn't ask a pedophile to baby sit your children. I was strong but why make it harder for myself by constantly being around cocaine and drug users, Out of that environment I did not even think about cocaine but I wasn't out of that environment with constant reminders so I had no choice but to think about it all the time when all I wanted to do was forget about it.

I did not want cocaine or drug users in my life. I wanted a better life and was not in that life through choice. The only reason I was still trapped in that life was because of my boyfriend. I wanted out of it so much that I did consider losing the relationship too. He too was desperate to get out and had told me over and over that he was frightened of losing me and leaving him behind in that life and may never get out without me. I couldn't leave him behind.

He was trapped and wanted out and if he did not have the debt, he would not deal or ever take cocaine. He seemed in constant turmoil and when he gave into temptation and took cocaine, he was always so sorry and hated himself for it. In the end I had no choice but to pay the debt for him as that was the only way we could get out of that life and I would have a better chance of keeping clean if he was clean.

I paid 10000 and cleared his debt and things were better for a while as I was not constantly in the company of cocaine and we wasn't arguing over him taking cocaine. He still smoked weed daily but he intended to give that up too. We were both more relaxed.

He would still go out with his druggie friends and I would not go as I was rarely invited as I did not drink or take drugs so I had no desire to go anyway. He would assure me he was not going to take drugs and wouldn't be tempted. He was tempted and did take cocaine but would either say he had not or he only had a line and how could I begrudge him that every now and then. After all he was not the addict and would never dream of doing it in my company so what's the harm in it. He was not going to go back to that lifestyle now he was finally out of it.

He didn't stop taking cocaine, only stopped telling me. He didn't stop dealing either and would again lie to me that he was only getting it for a mate.

Amazing as it seems now, I managed to stay clean for 3 months in that environment. But of course I was going to relapse.

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Chapter Eleven

Relapse

I met my friend for lunch and decided to have a glass of wine. I had had a glass of wine the week before and it had not made me feel I wanted drugs so I would allow myself the odd glass of wine now and then as despite the clinic warning us that any mind altering substance including alcohol could trigger my addiction to drugs. However I had never been a big drinker and could happily have one glass and leave it there. I had not taken drugs or had a drink for 3 months and had cracked it so I was confident that I could treat myself the odd glass of wine occasionally.

I didn't intend to take drugs that day and had no desire to and over lunch stated all the reasons why I would never take drugs again and genuinely believed I would never touch them again. I felt great. She told me how great I looked and how together I was. I felt happy, content and at peace with myself and no drug could make me feel better than I did now. We had a lovely day.

My boyfriend picked me up and I just knew he had drugs on him. On the journey home I asked him if he had drugs on him and he was honest and said yes. He had picked some up for one or two people and had intended to drop it off before he picked me up but had ran out of time.

I wanted to do it so I said I would like to have a line as I don't think I would like it anymore and I really think I could do one line and have the self control now not to have more. He pointed out the reasons I shouldn't and questioned if I really wanted to. I justified it by saying I felt I needed to get over my paranoia that I had about it being around me by facing it. Doing one or two lines would stop it being such a big issue as I had gone too far the other way and needed to trust in myself I had the willpower and self control now to stop at one or two lines.

It was a major issue for us that he was still having a few lines here and there and dealing on the odd occasion and we constantly argued about it but he didn't see the harm in it if he kept it away from me and did not do it around me as he wasn't an addict so it was not a problem for him like it was for me and he enjoyed a few lines and never felt the need to carry on. I was being unfair and made too much of a big deal out of it he would say.

I thought maybe if I did do it and was able to do what he did and stop after a few lines I may be less anti him doing it and it would stop being an issue between us. However if he could take it or leave it and his girlfriend had a major issue with him taking it as she was an addict surely he would stop so it was not an issue and not allow her to try drugs again so she didn't have an issue with him doing it.

We got home and a few of his friends were there smoking weed and having a few lines of the cocaine he had picked up for them. Seeing as I knew he had it, he didn't hide it when he handed it to his friends. Seeing as I knew they had it they asked if it was ok if they had a line or two which I said was fine.

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I went into the bedroom as although I wanted a line, I did not want to take it in front of them or openly as I felt ashamed. I had a moment of doubt and questioned if I really wanted to do this and felt anxious and nervous but told myself it was one line and it was not such a big deal. I decided that if I could do it without his friends knowing then I would but I would not do it if in front of them.

I did my first line after 3 months clean in the kitchen. I felt apprehensive straight after and went to the bedroom to compose myself. I felt in control and my boyfriend checked I was ok. I was. I was enjoying it again, no paranoia, no burning desire to do more and more. I felt content just doing a few lines and was happy to stop there. I had no come down. No reason not to do it again on another occasion.

I could have a few lines in the future without it being a big deal and would be able to tolerate him doing it now without it turning into an argument. I could control it now. I could live a normal life and be part of his life again.

A week or two later I had a few lines again and was happy to stop and I had none of the bad side effects that time either. So of course I did it again and again over the coming months.

Doing it every couple of weeks turned into doing it weekly, just weekends then the odd line in the week. The odd line then turned into a gram, then two grams but lying to myself and everyone else I only did the odd line occasionally and I actually believed it myself.

I told myself and everyone I was in control and enjoying it now and would never allow myself to go the way I had before and would stop if I ever started to feel the way I had before or any of those bad experiences returned. Those bad experiences had started to return and it was hit or miss whether taking cocaine would be something I enjoyed or had a bad time on but instead of stop taking it, I would take the risk and go so far as hide it when I felt paranoid or the got the dreadful comedown and tried to keep it to myself, even making an excuse for my change of mood being down to something else.

I knew deep down the cocaine was turning from fun to pain as it had before and I needed to stop but I hoped it was going to pass and I could see it through to the fun times again. After all I had spend a month in rehab, had 3 months clean and understood addiction and what was happening to me so how could it take over. Yes I was losing control a little but this time I was aware of it so with this knowledge I had no need to worry or panic as I would know when enough was enough and stop myself from going that low again as the pain from losing control before was still fresh in my mind.

Sadly knowing all that did not stop me plunging full on and head first into a problem worse than the one I had had before. The loss of control was worse as despite all I had learned and knew about addiction and the despair and pain it had taken me to before, I knew and feared where it was taking me again but I still could not stop myself. I wanted to stop but I couldn't and so I felt hopeless and helpless. The more hopeless, helpless and frightened I felt, the more drugs I took to block it out.

I went to extremes and even thought the only way I could stop would be if I hit it really hard, took more than I wanted to, really pushed it as too much of anything makes you sick right... Yes it made me sick, it hurt but no matter the pain it caused me physically and emotionally, I could not stop. I hated it but still could not stop.

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Chapter Twelve Deeper in hell

Now I was back to days and days on end of binging and tortured by it. I tried to fight it, I wanted to fight it but I couldn't.

I screamed, I cried, I hurt myself and I hurt others. I pleaded with it to release me, I pleaded with myself for the strength to keep fighting it. I prayed to every known god, I prayed to everything and everyone to help me but I knew I had not been able to beat it after wanting to with every part of me and getting the best help I could possibly get. Rehab had failed me and 3 months clean was something I could never do again. It was too strong for me. Even suicide had failed me. I had lost.

All day every day I prayed to die. I prayed to be shown the way to kill myself once and for all, pleaded to be shown the way I could end it and just die without failing at this one last wish. The answer wouldn't come so I cursed and damned god and challenged him to take my life and not be such a coward.

All I thought about all day every day was how to die and how I hated god for leaving me in this pain rather than end this hell and what did I need to do to take my life I didn't want when it could be given to someone more deserving.

I tried to tell my boyfriend this as I hoped he would help as I was nothing but a burden to him anyway but it pushed him further away. I even resented him for it as I thought after everything it was the least he could do! I couldn't have felt worse, he didn't love me, didn't want me and probably wanted me dead but he was so selfish he couldn't even help me die!

I defied him and I defied god as pleading with them both had got me nowhere so I played with death by taking so many drugs that noone should survive and mixing it with lots of alcohol, didn't eat, took prescription drugs on top and if I threw up I would carry on even when my whole body was in extreme pain. I would do this for 5 days or so without sleep, no love, no contact with the outside world, no nothing until I was unconscious but everytime I eventually came too and knew I was still alive and still in hell.

Everytime I survived I was hit with the notion that my boyfriend was spending more time with his female friend and the more important she was to him than me and of course I blamed myself as I wasn't worth spitting on as I was a druggie so my feelings did not count so I allowed them to hurt me and treat me so very bad and instead of feel wronged I was made to feel it was no more than I deserved. They thought it, I thought it, everyone thought it! I was worthless and still kept living and I was ashamed because of it.

I had only one thing, cocaine. I even hated that too. I was in full blown drug addiction, doing it all day every day for days on end but hating it too.

I rarely left the house or even the bedroom. I didn't wash or shower for weeks on end, rarely even got dressed, rarely ate but had the odd innocent smoothie every few days and was just skin and bone, I was about 7 and a half stone but I didn't notice really and nor did anyone else

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as I hardly saw anyone including my boyfriend for weeks on end. When I saw him I was so full of hatred I couldn't bare him near me. We would argue, he would say how much he hated me on cocaine, I would accuse him lying and cheating, He would leave and we wouldn't speak for days, I would apologise then get angry again and take back the apology when it would come to light that he had lied about spending time or staying over at his female friends house.

I felt trapped in the house but too frightened to go outside in the day time where I could see other people whether strangers or not and they could see me. I longed to run away where noone could find me so at night or the early hours of the morning many times I would get in my car and drive for hours, never really sure where I was going but aiming for somewhere remote with no people, no houses, no cars. How I never ended up in a ditch I will never know as I didn't even think of the consequences of driving high on cocaine and drunk despite being aware on occasion that I could not see straight. I would see things that were either not there or think something like a bush or tree was a person or an animal and swerve to miss them.

I usually would end up in the heart of the countryside down a remote country lane and park up and just sit in the car before I would get the urge to drive some place else. In the most remote places I would stay all day if I was certain there wouldn't be anyone or any car drive past just taking more cocaine and drinking more until it was nighttime again and I was sure I could drive back home without seeing a soul. Sometimes I was gone for days just sitting in my car, only getting out to go to the toilet or be sick. Usually without any shoes on and in pyjamas I had been wearing for days, no money, no phone, only drugs, alcohol and cigarettes.

I knew noone would ever know where I was or find me and that's exactly what I wanted but still on returning home and knowing noone had even called or even noticed that I had been gone and missing for days was heartbreaking. It was as if I didn't exist or matter to even one person. I was already dead and forgotten but couldn't even die.

I had an apartment in Bulgaria which was remote and I wanted to go and stay there for a few days but the effort of getting there was too much for me to handle. I managed to talk myself into it a few times, book the flight then last minute couldn't actually go through with it.

It felt too overwhelming for me to drive 15 mins to the airport, board a flight to get me there in 3 hours, get in a hire car the other end and drive on one road practically for 40 mins to be there. I didn't have to pack, just shower and dress and go but still had three or four failed attempts, not even managing to leave the house. I was either too wasted and paranoid, too exhausted and weak from days on end of binging, on a come down or craving more drugs so badly that getting more was all that mattered.

Attempt five I actually did it but only just. I was ready to back out waiting to board the plane but I was so tired I could hardly keep my eyes open so the need to sleep won over having to get the shuttle bus back to the carpark to get the car and drive home.

I fell asleep straight away and woke up 20 mins to landing feeling absolutely dreadful and in tears. I couldn't control it and was aware everyone was staring. A few people including the air hostess asked if I was ok so I made up a lie to excuse the tears. I told them that a relative of mine who lived in Bulgaria had been diagnosed with a terminal illness so I was going to see them as it would probably be my last chance. I even believed it myself and carried on crying as if it were true.

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I arrived at the apartment and felt safe and climbed into bed and slept for 24 hours. When I woke up I thought about drugs like I did every time I woke up but I knew I didn't have a hope in hell of getting any there so to my surprise I was able to get the thought out of my head without feeling too disappointed about it. Not something I could do at home.

After a few days of eating and sleeping well, the sun and sea air I felt better than I had done in a long time. I was clearer minded, rested, full of beans and glad to be away from drugs. I had more strength and determination not to go back into that rut when I went home now I had broken the cycle.

Chapter thirteen

On the mend again

When I got home I was able to not fall back into taking drugs day in day out. I kept my drug taking to the evenings, most if not every night I had a couple of grams of coke but would call it time no later than 3 or 4 in the morning, get some sleep and not start again until early evening and not before 4pm. It was a huge improvement and I started to see more of my boyfriend again but as far as he knew I was only having a gram every other day.

I was stronger when it came to him too. I was not prepared to be lied to anymore and was not prepared to let problems between us send me full speed into taking drugs all day. We decided that going traveling could be just what was needed and something to look forward to and stop us both doing drugs so often.

We had planned to go in 6 months but 6 months passed and it wasn't the right time as his cousin was getting married and he was the best man. The stag do was June, the wedding in August so we settled for booking 3 weeks in Bulgaria in July with a view to going traveling the beginning of the following year.

I enrolled to do a diploma online in drug and alcohol addiction counseling. I was engrossed in it. I was a drug addict myself but totally unaware of the technical side of it, the theories, the science and counseling of people like myself. My first written assignment I completed in a matter of days despite the guidance suggesting it would be a month of work. I was marked on it achieving 100%! Over the months I passed every assignment and never got less than 90%.

I had insider knowledge after all, being a drug addict. I agreed with and could relate to a lot of the diploma syllabus but I also challenged many things and discounted theories by providing examples based on my own experiences. I knew what methods would work on me and those that were not helpful at all.

This experience taught me that drug addiction was not totally understood and I feel strongly that no one should counsel drug addicts unless they are a drug addict. I will go further by saying Government, hospitals, the education system are on dangerous ground by not consulting drug addicts before passing laws and issuing policy. In fact until they do addiction will continue to grow. Already now drugs are common place in every day life and its more likely that most people have tried them or are exposed to them than not. These days a person who does not take drugs is very rare and its pretty impossible to find someone from my generation and below who has never once tried drugs. I don't know of one person.

Chapter Fourteen

Knock down again

The lads were going to Benidorm on the stag do, my boyfriend too. I did feel a little worried about it and told him my concerns but he reassured me I could trust him and I was certain I could as after all his dad and uncle were going and why would he betray my trust anyway. I was not taking lots of drugs so felt comfort that my reservations were unfounded. Things were going well and we had turned a corner.

I decided I was not going to take drugs all that weekend so I would not be paranoid and start thinking the worse. I said if he preferred not to speak over the weekend we could speak when he got back but he said he didn't want us not to talk all weekend as he would miss me. When he left we was on good terms.

He txt me when they arrived to say they were dropping bags at the hotel and going straight out but would call me later as he wasn't taking his phone out with him in the day. I replied saying have fun. He didn't call or txt again that day or night but I was ok about it. He rang about 4pm the following day, I was cool about it. He was upbeat and relaying stories from the day and night before and said how much he missed me. He said he had been good by not smoking weed and felt better for it. He apologized for not calling the day before but he stayed out when the others went back to the hotel to get changed. He said he would call me tomorrow.

He never called. He txt about 7pm saying hope I was ok. I replied saying all fine, hope he was having fun and being a good boy still. I was referring to smoking weed. He replied saying of course, my body is all yours. I was actually a little taken back by his response so replied to say I meant being good by not smoking weed. He didn't reply.

I saw him when he got back and all was fine. I didn't ask much more about the stage do except was it fun. He gave me a brief overview of the weekend and that was that until a month later when his cousin joined us in Bulgaria and was talking to me about his stag do.

It was very apparent that for some reason the version of events my boyfriend had mentioned which I had no reason to not believe were entirely different to the weekend that the stag was portraying. In fact they could have been two completely different weekends.

My boyfriend had said he was with the stag all weekend, the stag said the first night he and another friend went off and did their own thing as they lost my boyfriend and he went missing for hours and had no idea where he went. The second night my boyfriend said they all went to some clubs and strip bars together and his cousin said the stag party went back to the hotel

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early as one of the guys got into a fight over some girl but my boyfriend stayed out to look for his dad. I said nothing but as soon as his cousin went to the toilet he said I swear I didn't do anything to hurt you, you do believe me don't you.

I didn't believe him but I kept my mouth shut and the moment we got home, I logged into his facebook account and sent a message from him to one of the guys on the stag who he claimed he was with when missing and who he said he stayed out with the following night. I wrote my girlfriend knows I wasn't where I said I was on the stag do, I said I was with you if she asks at the wedding. He replied saying no problem mate, what you do is your business. I replied as him and asked what did everyone else know and his mate replied saying I don't remember much but all I heard was the next day, you had got a BJ off some girl.

The first thing I did was get drugs. Then I rang him and said was there anything he should tell me about the stag do. He said no. I was shaking from head to toe but kept calm and asked him why then do the guys on the stage do think you got a BJ.

After a long pause he told me it never happened but stupidly he had told people it did and was sorry he had said it but it was nothing more than a stupid comment made when drunk which he regretted deeply.

I wanted to believe him but it was on my mind all the time. I had no choice but to believe him as he was adamant it never happened and to keep bringing it up and dissecting it, he told me was only coming between us and no good would come of it by sending myself crazy over something that never happened.

I never got a straight answer about what had gone on, stories changed but I was so wasted all the time I didn't know what was true and what was fiction or what I thought I knew or didn't know. It made no sense and I didn't have it in me to make any sense of it. I didn't know where to start.

I resented him with all my heart. Whether it was true or not true didn't make much difference as either way he had abused my trust yet again. I did not know what was worse. He had got a BJ or he had lied that he had. He had either cheated or he was happy to tell people he had as he thought nothing of my feelings regardless and would have been happy for me to go to a wedding where the stags thought his girlfriend meant so little to him that he would get a BJ behind her back or be happy for them to think that.

From that moment on I buried myself in drugs.

I took drugs every minute I could so I could numb myself and block out any hurt or pain or thoughts of what may had happened. I was my only option. He said it never happened, I could not prove it either way but I could not stop torturing myself over it and could not let it go. The more drugs I took the more paranoid and hurt I felt when the buzz wore off so the more drugs I took to keep the high.

My world fell apart and again I was in the grips of full blown drug addiction. I did 20 grams on one occasion within 24 hours. One line after another. My paranoia and grasp on reality were shot to pieces.

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This time I hardly even got out of bed. I had the drugs on the table next to my bed so all I would do for days on end is reach over, have a line and lie back down. Sleep for a day or so and repeat it all again. To get up and go to the toilet was an effort and my whole body shaked and ached. This was my life for months. Its no wonder that trying to recall those months now is nearly impossible.

In fact out of all of that time, I can only recall two days. The one day I freaked out from paranoia and the day I attempted suicide again.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The final straw

I was so wasted every day I had lost all sense of reality. I did not know what was real or not real. I would hallucinate thinking people were there, talk to them then realize noone was there, I would think I was somewhere else then realize I was in my bedroom. I would find myself standing hovering over an item and then not recall why that item was there or how long I was standing there.

Everything in my head was scrambled but I was not worried or concerned about it at all. I felt numb and my thoughts were too scrambled to make any sense so I didn't try to. One minute it would be daylight and I would be lying in bed and the next recollection would seem only minutes later but it would be dark and I would be standing in the hallway.

This period of feeling nothing with no concept of time, not knowing or questioning what was real or a delusion or what I was doing strangely felt right and of comfort to me. Well in fact I didn't question it or think about it but I was not frightened or worried about it. I was removed from all feelings, emotion and sanity and very little awareness of it.

The day when I was thrown back into the realms of sanity was one of the most frightening days of my life.

From nowhere a fear that I cannot describe took over me. I am not too sure what I was actually frightened of but I was scared out of my wits. Sheer terror engulfed me.

I moved furniture from my bedroom and lounge and stacked it up against the front door. I crawled along the floor looking for somewhere to hide. I got under the bed, I still was not safe, I emptied a cupboard in the kitchen and got into it, I still was not safe. I had a sofa bed in the lounge which I climbed into the framework of after removing the mattress, I still wasn't safe.

In the end I took every item of clothing, duvets, pillows, towels and put them in the bathroom. I carried in some chairs and barricaded the bathroom door which I had locked. I then buried myself under a pile of clothes and soft furnishings which was nearly reaching the ceiling and I lied there trying not to move or even breathe. I do not know how long I stayed there, hours or maybe days but it was a long time. I was frightened for my life.

Even when I had come down from the drugs and felt sure I had nothing to fear, it took hours for me to open the bathroom door and truly believe I was safe. I was so drained I slept for days after and that experience had frightened me enough that I swore I would never touch drugs again.

I went through days of hell after, my whole body hurting and craving drugs to the point that I felt violent. I would break things, punch the walls, punch myself in the face, pull my hair out and then cry uncontrollably asking god to take my life.

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Of course it was all too much for me so after 3 days I got loads of drugs delivered. The dealer took my two bank cards from under the mat and supplied me with 600 pounds of cocaine. The first lines I took relieved the physical pain I was in.

Then it was gone! The last few lines went and just left me feeling sunken and in too much emotional and physical pain that I thought it would kill me so I decided to speed up the process.

I got a knife and tried to talk myself into cutting my throat but I knew the knife was not sharp enough. I punched myself repeatedly in the face and head until I felt dizzy as all I felt was hatred for myself.

I drank a bottle of nightnurse to wash down the box of codeine.

Next thing I knew I was awoken to find my auntie, cousin, my boyfriends mum and paramedics in my bedroom.

My boyfriend had been concerned as for days I had not answered his calls. He asked his mum to call round and when I didn't answer the door despite her banging for hours she called my cousin who was a locksmith who broke into my flat, then called an ambulance and my auntie and here they all were.

They saw the empty nightnurse bottle and codeine box but I denied I had taken them. The ambulance staff asked if I would go to the hospital with them but I refused. I was angry and told them all to leave as they had no right breaking into my home. They would not leave. I was informed if I did not go willingly then I would be forced to go under the mental health act. I denied what I had done over and over.

In hospital again! My auntie by my side while I continued to tell them all they had made a mistake and I had taken nothing. Noone believed me.

My dad arrived at the hospital and he was heartbroken. I was so angry that he had been called but I couldn't continue to lie. My dad and me had only in recent years got to know each other. I had only shown him the side of me that I wanted him to see as I wanted him to be proud of me and he was. Now I was lying in a hospital bed after trying to kill myself because I was a drug addict. I thought he would hate me and be so disappointed that after us getting in touch after all those years, his daughter was a fake and nothing more than a low life druggie.

He wasn't disappointed, he was hurt. I was disgusted with myself.

He insisted on me going to stay with them. I had never stayed at his house ever and had only ever visited once or twice but I went.

I slept for days and didn't get up for a week. He was so kind. I told him the truth about the drugs and how I felt and I didn't feel alone any more.

When I finally went home, I had a reason not to take drugs again. I couldn't do it for me but I could do it for my dad. I wanted him to be proud of me.

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We spoke daily and no matter how much I wanted drugs I did not take them. When I felt weak I called him and this time I was determined to change my life.

My whole family were now aware of the problem and watching me like a hawk so there was no way I was going to let everyone down again. I felt ashamed and guilty for what I had put them through. I was not going to cause them any more pain.

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Chapter seventeen The final final straw

It was tough but the craving for drugs was not stronger than my desire to make my family proud and keep the promise I had made to them that I would never do it again. This was serious my mum and my dad knew everything now. They had spoken to my boyfriend who reassured them that our lives would change.

I felt I had a chance of now breaking the habit and was willing to do everything I could to make it happen.

I also decided that a night out with my (drug free) friend would be the tonic I needed. I made an effort to go out even though the thought of going out without taking drugs that evening had no appeal whatsoever. My friend and her boyfriend were both going out so I asked my boyfriend if he wanted to come too. He didn't.

I was actually enjoying myself until my boyfriends female friend turned up very drunk. The moment she saw me she was in my face slurring abuse. I ignored it. Then without warning she went to hit me and thankfully my friends boyfriend blocked her. I just froze.

I felt humiliated and after another round of her screaming abuse at me outside the pub, my first thought was to get cocaine, even asked a couple of people if I could pose a line which I did before I went home.

My boyfriend was at my house and when I explained what had happened he was not interested in the slightest. In fact he seemed irritated with me and made excuses for her as she was drunk and suggested I probably was not totally innocent in it all. I could not believe I was having to defend myself while my boyfriend defended her. His comment of all comments was when he said what did I want him to do about it, ring her and have a go at her? After all she was a friend and he cant be expected to not be friends with her.

I asked him to leave, partly because I was upset and partly because it was the excuse I needed to take drugs.

I lost myself in drugs for a few days but although I wanted to go on, my family were not going to let me go off the radar for any longer than a few days. I lied when I eventually answered their calls that my phone was playing up.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Do or die

I had to do something. Your whole family knowing you are a druggie really does screw up your using. Them being fully aware of all the facts and dangers and knowing you are a drug addict but you wanting to carry on regardless with the knowledge that it will eventually kill you and becoming accepting of this, destroys whatever little self worth you might have left and is not something you can easily explain. Another reason to despise yourself!

The fear that nothing has stopped you taking drugs. Failed at suicide, failed at rehab leaves no hope whatsoever that anything can be done to save you. Sadly at this stage most friends and family have run out of patience and if you still have anyone left, their disgust and disappointment is on a par with your own disgust and disappointment with yourself.

This is a dangerous time as I can only presume that like me most addicts at this stage, only have one thing left. Acceptance that there is no hope and you will die a drug addict. You don't even dare to hope that death will come sooner rather than later. You expect it will be a painful death but after all it's no more than you deserve.

The thoughts may remain that it is an illness but to be honest, that mattered little to me. I am sure that doesn't matter to most people either. A terminal illness such as cancer will leave everyone full of pity and compassion but it does not change the outcome. Perhaps the difference is that the cancer patient may want to live whereas I would have chosen death without a second thought rather than live life as a drug addict. The lowest of the low. Frowned on by society and treated with the same contempt as a criminal. Murderers, rapists, burglars and drug addicts, all one and the same.

So I lied to my family for what I felt was the right reasons. They were not the right reasons, they were reasons and excuses of a drug addict still trying to deny their addiction.

However I had to do something drastic, even if just to maintain the lie.

I was off my face with these thoughts enhanced so I did what I thought was the right thing and booked a trip around the world.

CHAPTER 18

My best attempt so far

I boarded a plane to Los Angeles, a place I had never been before. I was excited but scared to death and if someone at the airport would have offered me a gram of coke, I would not have boarded the plane. Noone did so off I went..

I arrived in LA, tired and confused but I had got that far so felt a pinch of achievement for once.

I was exhausted but knew I had to make the best of it. I checked into my hotel and went straight out to see the sights. Yes I was knackered but I had to do this. I was changing my life.

I did every tourist trip available. I cycled 22 km to Malibu and back. I went to Santa Monica, Venice beach, Hollywood, Beverley Hills, I did everything.

I had a good friend who was an actress/model who lived in LA so made arrangements to meet up with her. She is semi famous so able to secure entrance to the most exclusive places. We had a table on the patio at Chateaux Marmont for dinner and after were photographed by the paparazzi as we left. Of course they were photographing her and me as I happened to be with her. I found the whole situation irritating as the only thing on my mind was drugs.

Her driver took us to a club where we walked straight in and was escorted to the VIP area where we were greeted with Champagne on ice at our private table, compliments of the club owner. We were treated like celebs because she was a celeb. Looking back it was an amazing experience but it meant nothing to me at the time as without drugs it all seemed dull. My friend was very anti drugs and had no idea that I had ever taken any let alone be a full blown cocaine addict. I made the best of it.

The next day she had been invited to a Louis Vitton opening party on Rodeo Drive for which she had confirmed me as her plus one. She even apologized for having to work while I was in town but assured me it would be just a couple of hours with Canapes and champagne on tap and Louis Vitton freebies such as handbags and purses. To make up for it we were to have dinner that evening at one of the best restaurants in Hollywood with a well known director and party to celebrate his birthday.

I was so desperate for drugs the next day that I decided that trying to find cocaine was more important. I ignored her calls the next morning and dodged the Louis Vitton event. I would call her back once I had scored drugs.

Like some shameless junkie I went to the roughest areas and asked the most shady of characters for cocaine. My full on English directness and desperation made anyone who would usually be happy to sell drugs run for the hills as that's not how it was done in LA. My approach wasn't streetwise so I was not worth the risk to these people. I went home empty handed, irritated and climbing the walls. I did not want to go to dinner that evening so ignored the numerous calls from my friend. I even made up a cover story that I never received the messages she had left at the hotel. My lie was that the hotel had changed the room I was

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booked in last minute but had not updated their records so all messages had gone to the wrong room.

I left LA a day or so early as I felt so ashamed.

CHAPTER 19

Sidney and game over

After a 15 hour flight I arrived at Sidney airport at 8am to be greeted by my best friend and her friend at the airport after they had had a night getting drunk and coked up.

To celebrate my arrival we got drunk and snorted cocaine. The supply of coke ran out after a few lines so I insisted we got more. It was 300 ASD a gram in Australia so of course I paid for two.

I didn't sleep for two days after not sleeping the whole day traveling there but I felt great, I was on holiday in Oz with my best mate so a come down was never an option. It was surreal.

Being with my best mate made me feel like me again but too comfortable so I thought I could do anything.

I did everything but felt so confident that I felt doing everything on drugs at 300ASD was no problem. It made it better. I was on holiday after all. I was with my best mate so relaxed and on a high and wanted to feel as high as I could as I was safe and in good company.

It was a good thing that cocaine was so expensive there I thought as no way could I afford to do it on a daily basis at 300AUS a gram. Besides I did not know any dealers and my friend and her friends only knew one dealer and he was cagey due to strict drugs laws so he was not prepared to allow anyone to pass his number on and not interested in new customers and the risk associated with it

The friend of the friend was not even comfortable for me to go to the dealers apartment with him so said I would have to wait outside. I asked if, at the very least, he would ask the dealer if I was able to go into the building as I was visiting from England and not comfortable being left outside alone in a strange city. After the friend of a friend was berated and asked twenty questions about why he thought it was ok to bring someone with him, I was allowed to wait at reception although he was not at all happy about it.

His apartment was in the heart of Sidney and like fort knocks, door men, codes for lift to each floor. Once outside the building, you had to call him before entering the building. The door men would buzz you in only after them ringing up from reception and if he bothered to pick

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up the phone, had not changed his mind and authorized it, the door men would escort you to the lift and punch in the code that allowed access to his floor.

A part of me was pleased that it was not going to be easy to get drugs in Australia so a couple of weeks passed and I just accepted it was how it would be. Until one night the friend of a friend had a flat battery so needed to call from my phone. Seeing as he was using my phone, I insisted on getting in the lift as he would need to call the dealer once outside the apartment as I was not too happy about him just taking my phone I said.

I was not allowed in the apartment and before the dealer even opened the door, he insisted on calling my number back so he could be sure about who was outside his door. However for me this was a step forward as he now knew my number and had briefly seen my face. I just had to win him over now I had his number. After we left his building I sent a discreet txt just apologizing if I had made him feel uncomfortable and thanking him for sorting us out and signed off Tam the Pomme. He replied that it was no problem. I replied saying save my number in case friend of friend used my phone again.

A week later, I txt giving my sincere apologies for txting but claiming I could not get hold of the friend of a friend who had got the drugs for me anyway the last few times, so thought I would take the chance and contact him direct but to forgive me if I had over stepped the mark for I am just a stupid English girl. He did not reply so after half an hour, I called his number. He did not answer so I left a message saying how sorry I was, it was out of order for me to contact him and I would never cross the line again and I felt truly embarrassed. He called back straight away and said it was not a problem but he was not home so I could either meet him or wait until he was home. I agreed to meet him! Thank god he was at a bar I was 10 mins away from.

I got to the bar in record time, saw him and went over with apologies and claims of total embarrassment and insisting on buying him a drink. He loved the humbleness so from then on he was happy to deal to me.

I decided it was something I would do only every now and then, not even weekly. Besides at 300AUS a gram I could not afford it. I was there after all to get away from drugs and was on a trip of a lifetime with my best friend and feeling like my old self again. Confident, safe, relaxed! The drugs were not needed really but doing them as a treat made the whole experience better. My friend and I had a ball! We laughed, we talked, we reminisced, we both had missed that total comfort and ease that best friends have and brought out the best in each other again. People even remarked on our closeness and how one was an extension of the other. Two peas in a pod still after not seeing each other for over 7 years.

We talked about drugs in detail on them and off them and I was totally honest about everything from the amount I was taking at home, the lies I had told to cover up, how I struggled to get on with most people in the town, especially my boyfriends friends. I even admitted that I thought I have to be the problem as not really anyone liked me these days or had a good word to say about me and even what I felt were good intentions were always judged as bad. I told her how worried I was as I genuinely was confused and unaware of what it was about me that seemed to cause most of these people to dislike me so much that I was excluded, avoided, sniggered at and constantly criticized. Surely if most people felt the same, it had to be me. I even admitted I thought I was losing my mind and asked her for her honest opinion when I relayed all that had gone on with these people. I even believed how she

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thought that my only problem and reason I was doing it much more at home was due to the lowlife people I was now associated with. The small town mentality where people like me stuck out like a sore thumb and would always be a target. She reminded me of a time when these peoples opinions wouldn't even register with me and being surrounded by that level of negativity and small mindedness is not a situation I would ever have allowed myself to be in. Jealousy was their problem and not an option to think anything else.

One time to give her a break I just stayed at the dealers apartment for a few days doing coke and talking shit. After day 3 she came and joined us for a day and then got us the hell out of there.

I knew it was probably about time I went back to the UK. I had been away for months and had spent a fortune.

I decided to go to Byron Bay on my own first then we would meet at Surfers Paradise. Whilst at Byron Bay I had heard about a place approx 70 km away called Nimbin 'the drug capital of Australia' according to wikipedia. Apparently this place hosted an equivalent to Woodstock in 1973 and many hippies stayed there and set up home. It was a must see!

Some crazy surfer dude stoner took me. When we got there he said to meet up with him again in a few hours at the agreed place. I went to where he told me was the best place to get cocaine. I placed my order and was told to meet the dealer at that spot in an hour. In the meantime I decided to buy some weed which everyone and their dog were selling in the streets for \$10 a bag. I am not a weed fan but when in Nimbin of course I would go with the flow.

I rolled a joint and smoked it amongst the hippies but then got the munchies so left in search of food. I lost all track of time and before I knew it, it was past the time I was supposed to meet my surfer dude lift back to Byron Bay. I ran to the meeting place 30 mins late with a massive bag of sweets and junk food only to find his van gone. I wasn't too worried as I was stoned and knew I could get back the next day so I rolled another joint and was quite content but to my surprise an hour or so later I was woken from my daze by flashing headlights and the sound of gun of roses and the surfer dudes van. He said he had left but on the way home realized he had forgotten something! Me!!! He ate all my snacks and was pleased he went back for me otherwise he would have been hungry on his drive back.

After the hazy days at Byron Bay I went to Surfers Paradise and my bestfriend joined me for my final few days. We mainly stayed in the apartment smoking weed I had got from Nimbin but we actually had the best time and laughed and laughed,

We went back to Sidney and the last night she had booked a 5 star hotel for us so of course I got us cocaine, Next morning I was on my way home via Johannesburg.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Memoirs of a cocaine addict

Cuba and it all starts again

I had not seen my boyfriend in months so within days of me getting back from my world trip, we were spending Christmas and New year in Cuba, My treat!

I touch down 19th December and was back on a plane two days later.

We both were pleased with each other as the time apart had helped us both get a grip on the cocaine issue and we were aware now it was that causing our problems.

Within days of arriving in Havana, we had met a Cuban called Howard who sold us cigars and could get us cocaine. We happily went with him to his home. A modest room in the backstreets of Havana with a broken wooden walkway two floors above a courtyard where poultry and pigs roamed. It was dirty and smelly and so very unsafe but we convinced ourselves we were seeing the real cuba so all worth it. The cocaine was the same price as the UK but Howard let us try it before buying and we were more than happy to pay that price. We would get it just the once seeing as we were on holiday and it was good stuff.

We were in Havana 5 days and saw Howard twice to buy 3 each time. We would party in Havana and then have 10 days on the beach to relax so it was no problem.

The beach resort of Varadero was 150 km from Havana and we had been told that it was not easy to get drugs there which we saw as a good thing. After a few days of being there a Cuban man approached us on the street asking if we wanted cigars, weed, cocaine. Seeing as we had heard it was difficult to get on the beach we decided to get it seeing as we had 10 days chilling. We ordered \$150 of weed and \$400 of coke. The guy was very cagey and took us to a back street away from the tourist police while his friend went to get it. We were clever and said no money until we got the gear. His friend came back 10 mins later with two tightly wrapped packets which seemed huge to us. The guy said for us to put them in our backpack straight away as worried about tourist police. We gladly handed over the money, thanked him. He said if we wanted more he was on that street most afternoons.

We jumped in a 1950s Cuban taxi straight away and went back to the hotel feeling very pleased with ourselves. When we opened both packets, all we had was cake! Sponge cake! We were so angry that without thinking we decided we was going back to the street to find them with our tourist Cuba baseball bats in hand. It was in hindsight a blessing we could not find them as we meant business and searched for them for a good while. Every day thereafter we kept an eye out for them but of course they were long gone. Afterall we had given them probably 3 months wages.

To rectify the wrong, we decided a few days later to hire a 1950s classic car and driver for the day to drive us back to Havana to see Howard. The hire for the day was \$150 so why not. Of course I paid as I had the holiday, the Havana drugs, the cake and the new supply from Howard. We were drinking and listening to loud Cuban music all the way there and on the way back had an added bonus of snorting coke too. Howard felt honoured we had driven back to Havana just to see him so we felt like royalty and on top of the world.

We had a great holiday and decided to move in together to my cottage when we got back which I was renting out.

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We moved in, well I did most of the moving and we took cocaine, argued, he walked out for days, we made up and did it all again.

Groundhog day, all day, everyday, day in day out. Month after month. Year after year...

Chapter Twenty One

And repeat

Over the next few years came another suicide attempt, some brief moments of sobriety, constant arguments, the end of our relationship, the reconciliation of our relationship. You get the general idea by now but by now I am sure you are bored of reading it, as I was certainly bored of living it. However I carried on living it!

Lets fast forward to another day which is much recent. I have not worked for a year. I am in about 70,000 of debt and debt collectors, baylifites are the only people I socialize with. I am on antidepressants to combat my depression and anxiety brought on by chronic drug abuse as my nervous system is so damaged and my brain so addled that it can no longer register what it is to feel normal and naturally happy.

My only income is from benefits. Yet still more times than I care to admit, my fortnightly benefit is spent in two days on drugs leaving me without food or the bare essentials such as toilet paper to soap. I swear to god when I am starving or thieving something to eat from a supermarket that I have learned my lesson and the next bit of benefit money I get will not go on drugs. I really mean it and repent over and over asking for forgiveness and again offering my soul to take this addiction and pain away. I get my next benefit money and do it all again. I do pause for a moment and try to tune in to the promises I made and the consequences of spending all my money on drugs again but do it anyway.

I was fully aware that if I did not change this lifestyle once and for all and now, the chances of me changing it were going to run out.

Having less money and only getting money every two weeks did mean I was not taking as many drugs as I would like despite me still spending all I had. The positive being that going longer periods without drugs and having to accept I had no choice, showed me that I could abstain. It crossed my mind that if I really wanted drugs those days without money, I could steal, manipulate others to get it or even have sex in exchange for it. I knew in my heart I was not prepared to go that low or any lower than I had. In fact I started to see having no money as a blessing and was even grateful not to win the lottery every week as I would never stop then until I was dead. Also having days, even a week without drugs was making me see clearer that I sometimes felt happy without them and how they did affect me in a more negative way than I had truly realized or cared to admit to in the past.

At first I allowed for it by accepting that the next day after a binge, I would just sleep all day. Force myself to sleep even so as not to think about it or let the guilt set in. My whole body would ache as if I had the flu. The next few days I would feel low and unconfident with no motivation to do anything, making even the basic things like showering, cooking, answering my phone like a real chore for which I had to gear myself up to do. I just put off most things until day four which by then I knew I could and should struggle to make an effort as by day five, I would feel better and the cocaine would be out of my system.

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Whether it was partly in my head or fact, I was always more confident, positive, motivated and happier in myself at day five and more comfortable not to have drugs and allowing myself to see I could feel better without them. I would also be aware that the cravings were not as strong and I could have hours from day five onwards without even thinking about them and knowing that I wanted a life without them.

Of course though after a week if the opportunity to take drugs came about, I would put those feelings of abstaining to the back of my mind and convince myself that seeing I had not done them for a week and therefore was not dependent, it was fine for me to do it again, reward myself even for having a week clean and getting loads done. The reality being I had only recovered from the last binge in the last day or two so had only really gone a day or two in normality. Nothing to pat myself on the back for whatsoever.

I was moving forward but starting and stopping. Two steps forward and five steps back. I needed to move forward as I was fully aware that if I did not, my debts would result in me losing my home. I had been lucky to hold my creditors off for over a year by playing the depression card. This meant I was seen as a vulnerable person which gave me more protection under credit legislation. No company wants to take the risk for commercial and reputational reasons of making a mentally ill person homeless or potentially pushed to a suicide attempt. However after a few years of being patient no court would rule against a charge being put on the property to recoup the debts on sale of the property and even forcing the sale on the grounds that such a mentally ill person would be much better catered for in a care facility.

Chapter Twenty two
Its now or never

At 44, realistically I had already had half of my life. Before drugs got control of my life, thankfully I had achieved many things and travelled far and wide but I had lost more than I had gained from drugs and was not prepared to lose any more.

The financial loss, my self esteem, my life and my potential happiness are all things I can rectify in the future if finally I can put the drugs behind me. Sadly I have sacrificed having a family, children of my own, which is something I can not get back. Strangely that loss is where I draw my strength now to walk away from drugs.

There were two scenarios that could follow. One good, one bad. Both real and both up to me. The future was unwritten for me and could have gone either way but my heart hoped I finally could take the better option and overcome my addiction

Enough was finally enough! Somewhere deep inside I knew I was better than this. Stronger than this. I was not put on this earth to do nothing but take drugs. So I started at beginning of recovery once again. This time I had to go back to the basics and remind myself of everything I already knew I had to do to succeed.

I started eating healthier, exercising, doing meditation and reading. I sorted my CV and started applying for jobs. At first I was on my own most of the time as I hardly knew anyone who did not take drugs. I had many knock backs and the problems I had caused myself in my drug days kept surfacing, making me pay the price and keeping me shackled to the past.

I joined the library and if by fait, a book found me. It caught my eye as if by magic, so was the first book I used my new library card to borrow. It was called recovery 2.0 (Move beyond addiction and upgrade your life) by Tommy Rosen. This book really helped me change my life. I have included some of the golden nuggets

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