

## Recovering Story

I am a recovering alcoholic. I am also a former AFA Officer and an active Flight Attendant. It's been 3 years, 230 days+ days since my last drink. I always like to look at my sobriety clock every now and then.

I had my 1st full beer at the age of 10. I loved the taste from the 1st sip. By the time I was in 7th grade, I was already drinking beer on a regular basis. I knew older people and they would hook me up. By the time I reached high school, my love for alcohol was even stronger. Having facial hair and looking old enough to buy beer, I was able to do so at a nearby local market. I always had a stash in my truck ready for any party. I continually had a 6-pack or more stashed under my bed at home as well. I pretty much was drinking most days, but stayed very athletic and in sports. People thought how much and how often I was drinking was normal or at least I thought they did. I was definitely getting away with my alcoholism.

When I moved onto college, my love for the "hard stuff" got greater and I became a whiskey and vodka drinker. There wasn't a day that went by for a very long time that I didn't drink. I use to carry mixed drinks to class as well. I did many presentations in college while I was drinking. I just loved the taste of alcohol. My grades suffered a little, but I was content with my 2.8 grade average. I was passing college.

After college, I began working for the airlines. This is an environment where many people who love to drink, myself included, fit right in. I would always make my show times and would get constant praises from co-workers and passengers as to how well I was as a fellow FA. With that said, I was drinking by now up to a bottle a day, with beer and wine included on the weekend. I use to carry handles of alcohol on trips with me. By day 2 I would finish a large bottle and have to find a place to resupply my flight bag. One day I missed my show time and my life changed for the better.

I was at home and drinking as usual, I spilled a drink on my phone and it was dead. I also did not have internet service working at the time. I thought I was off of work and able to relax. I had forgotten that I had to fly that night and never called in or notified anyone. The next day, I had a policeman show up at my door for a "wellness check." I told him I was fine and wondered why he was there. He said that my company was concerned about me and wanted to make sure nothing had happened. Later that day, I had a few very good friends show up and make sure I was doing alright. One of those very good friends was Laurie. She told me I was going to lose my job, my friends, and my life if I didn't get help. I knew this to be true and was ready to go for help with my alcohol abuse.

I went into a residential treatment facility which was coordinated by my AFA EAP. I spent 5 days in detox and 30 days in the residential living. This was the best thing I ever did. The people were amazing from the staff to the counselors. I was happy to hear other stories from those in the program recovering as well. Having such a great support structure was helpful.

My parents were both alcoholics, my dad still is and my mother is currently going to Al-Anon. They are very supportive and been helpful along my journey with continued encouragement. I

myself have very good, close friends who are supportive and proud of me every day for being a recovering alcoholic.

It's very true, when I say I almost lost everything to my addiction. During my time of drinking, I have hated who I was and who I became and even thought of suicide as a way out. I am thankful to have never succeeded in that aspect/choice. I reflect everyday how bad I was and where I have come from. I am very happy to have my life back. It's a very sober and happy life.

I take every sober day and reflect on how wonderful my life has become. I once again love my friends, family, and most importantly MYSELF. You always have to take care of yourself 1st before ever helping others. I forgot that along the way while I was drinking. I hope to one day, after leaving the airlines, go work at a treatment program. I have so much support and positive energy to give to those who really need it. That is why today I volunteer on the AFA EAP committee.