



Alcohol Ruined Our Relationship

By Kourtney Rae Kohlman

Growing up I was always daddy's little girl. From the times helping him out in his shop to watching TV on his lap, I thought it was the best thing ever. My dad was my go to person when mom said no. I was his little princess and he made sure of it. I was his first child and that's why we were close when I was younger because we had a bond. A bond that fell apart so quickly because alcohol came before me.

I can remember the times when I was younger wondering why mommy was crying and daddy wasn't home. I'd wait up all night for my dad to get home from the bars or from the friend's house he never was at. There was no way I could go to sleep unless I knew my dad was home, away from the thing that took him away from me. The times I would wait up, I would hear the front door open but he couldn't make it up the stairs without falling and passing out. The tears would rush down my face as I would scream at my dad hoping he would wake up. It turned into a ritual almost. There would be times where

my dad wouldn't come home until the next morning or times he would get home after the bars closed and all I could hear from my bedroom were the arguments happening in the kitchen. One thing that scared me the most was the thought of my parents splitting up which was threatened many times—but who knew that would come true years later in 6th grade. No kid wants to think about having a split family and that was hard for me to take in, but just as hard for my younger brother who never could understand what was happening.

If alcohol wasn't enough, then lying added to it. I have been told countless numbers of lies from my dad about where he was and when he was coming home. On top of that, I have had promises broken that also made me skeptical about trust. As a little girl—and now—all I wanted to do was help my dad with his addiction. Out of all the things in the world, I would've thought that hearing the cries for my dad back would cause him to change. The lying never seemed to end.

Over all these years, I was hoping my dad would change. Hoping that there would be a spark that could change things around. But my eighth grade year I lost hope of that happening. My brother and I were staying the night at his house when my dad got super drunk. His words were slurring and he was acting like an idiot. My brother was the one trying to take care of him while I was getting angry that this was happening. The two were walking inside from locking up the shop when I looked at my dad and he said to me "I love your brother more than I love you. I wish he was my only child." Instantly, I broke down. No child wants to hear from their parent that you weren't wanted. It killed me inside and I knew I couldn't stay the night with him. My stomach got queasy and I was covered in tears. I called my mom to come get me and my brother because I wasn't leaving him behind.

Of all the things I learned from that experience, the most important was learning to never involve myself or be around other people in a situation like that. Alcohol is a horrible thing and to lose that connection with your parent over it makes it worse. I want people who struggled like I did to know it's okay to let go and move on because for me, I'm a lot happier now that I have moved on. I lost the bond with my dad and things will never be the same or how I wanted them to be. I started putting up a wall and to this day, those words my dad said to me have traumatized me. I can never trust him or believe in him the way I used to because alcohol ruined our relationship. 🚫

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Kourtney Rae Kohlman is a recent high school graduate from Montana. *Alert Magazine* congratulates her for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage her in the pursuit of her academic goals. We would also like to encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.