



# Living With the Root of Evil

By Amanda Lee

**WHAT IS THE** root of evil? Now that I am a senior I high school I believe I have seen it. I was never able to understand why someone would abuse alcohol or drugs. Even as a child it became very clear at a young age that alcohol and drugs were, in fact, bad for a person. However, I never came to this conclusion on my own. There were influences in my life who taught me this. I quickly learned that a person who abuses drugs/alcohol is the root of all evil.

Perhaps I should explain what I mean by what I have stated. From the time I was born until I was about six years old I was raised in an abusive household. My father was an alcohol and drug abuser. While he was under the influence of drugs or alcohol he would become abusive towards my mother. I remember being so confused as a toddler. The man that was supposed to provide and protect my family was a monster? I thought that my parents were supposed to be like the king and queen and love each other forever and ever? I learned that sometimes fairy tales don't come true. My parents pretended to be the all-American couple while in public or in front of friends, but once they were at home my father would return to his abusive behaviors and beat my mother.

There is one tragic night in particular that never seems to fade from my memory. I will say before I share my story with you that the childhood I lived, the night I

experienced, should never be lived again. I never wish any child to have to see what I saw. I never wish for any woman to have to go through what my courageous mother experienced.

My dad came home drunk one summer evening and my parents started fighting. I remember my mom grabbing my dad's care keys and my dad hitting her across the face. My dad was holding on to my mom's wrists and she was crying. She was trying to get away but my father's grip was unbreakable. My mom yelled and told my two sisters and me to go upstairs to our room. My dad told us to stay and watch what a dumb wife like her would get. I remember my older sister taking my hand and running my younger sister and me upstairs, and shutting the door behind us. The three of us listened from the top of the stairs as my parents continued to fight. I remember my sisters and I were screaming and crying, begging for my dad to stop.

That night my older sister called the police. My father went to jail for the umpteenth time. There was a dangerous man in our home—my own father—who, I am sure, was going to kill my mother if my sister had not called the cops. I never understood how a violent man like him could ever be let out of jail. Every time my dad would beat my mother and go to jail his friends would bail him out and he would be back the next day, sometimes the same night. This, to me, seemed so unfair.

On that night I developed a fear for people who abuse alcohol and drugs.

My mother finally gained the courage and got help from Hi-Lines Help for Abused Spouses. They relocated my, now family of four, to a new town. At six years old I was moved away from the only town I knew, the only people I had ever met because my "supposed to be" father had an uncontrollable temper while he was drunk or high. At that time I learned that people are going to walk in and out of my life, even if they are supposed to be there.

I remember the drive to our new home very clearly. I remember my mother telling my two sisters and me, "Things will be better, just us four girls, I promise! We are going to start over and be strong. No man will ever treat us the way your daddy did."

We drove in silence the rest of the way. Those words my mother shared set my strength for the life I live now. I am proud to say that I'm alcohol and drug free and I have vowed to maintain that status. Even though things may not have been better from then on, we had each other. I set this goal not only for myself but also for my mother.

My mother tried her best to provide for our family of four after the divorce and custody battle. However, with her disability she was unable to work and we began living off of social security and disability checks. I can clearly remember several times when our family had no money and we ate oatmeal for dinner. There were also several times when our power and running water would be turned off in our house. With the hard times I grew up a lot quicker than most kids my age were required to.

The root of all evil is a man like my father. The root of all evil is alcohol and drug abusers. The experience I was engaged in taught me how to be strong and courageous. I also learned that living in fear is a waste of valuable time and every bad moment should be turned into the best. Looking back now I see my father as a monster. I see every alcohol and drug abuser like my father who isn't willing to get help and remain a part of their family's lives as a coward. 🚫

## ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

*Amanda Lee is a high school senior from Montana. Alert Magazine congratulates her for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage her in the pursuit of her academic goals. We also encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.*