



Willing to Take the First Step

By Jacob Frankenberry

A personal experience that I've had with drugs was watching my older brother become an addict. It started when I was in fifth grade when he tried marijuana and has continued to the present. After that first time, he moved on to other drugs like meth, heroine, and cocaine to the point where he says that he's tried all of them. Time and time again my brother would make bad decisions such as stay out past his curfew, lie to our parents, and hang out with other people that were bad influences. Usually, when my younger brother and I went to bed I would wake up in the middle of the night to the sound of my parents screaming at my older brother to get his life together to the point where he was sobbing and said that he would change. Even at my young age I knew that he wouldn't change and that he would continue to make poor decisions. My brother kept making and breaking his promises of becoming a better person so much that I inevitably stopped believing him. He let me down so many times that I stopped feeling anything for him which was a bittersweet defense because even though I wouldn't let myself get too attached to him so that he could disappoint me, I wasn't able to feel anything for him either. This

made me angry at myself because one time my brother called our mom terrified that he might have shot an air bubble into his veins while doing drugs and was scared that he was going to die. When I first heard of this I didn't feel anything. I even imagined what I would say at his funeral and the only thing that I could think of was that he gave me some Rolos one time. I've been angry at myself for many years because of this because I feel that I should have felt something more in that moment, that I should have been scared or sad but I couldn't feel anything for him at all.

Early on, my brother's addiction was dealt with by my parents screaming at him to get his life together, and grounding him from hanging out with his "friends", as he called everyone he met. My parents tried many things to set my brother straight like having him spend the night in a jail cell once when he got in trouble with the law to try and scare him to the point where he would turn his life around. Unfortunately, it didn't and he spent four and a half years in prison. At first, I thought that his incarceration would be good for him because it would give him a chance to stay away from drugs and finally get clean. However, the pris-

ons that my brother stayed at weren't secure and he was able to obtain drugs from his inmates as well as the guards that had authority over him. Currently, my brother is staying at a treatment center called Yellowstone Rehabilitation Center where he's made a lot of progress in his recovery.

Even though my brother is getting better about ending his addiction to drugs, I still find myself angry with him for all of the pain that he's caused my family, as well as angry at myself for not feeling anything for him. I did attend a family therapy session while my brother was at the rehabilitation center and we've tried to create more of a relationship with each other by texting but it feels like it's not working. Recently, my brother relapsed and broke his long streak of remaining sober. When I heard this news, I didn't want to talk to my brother, but over time I realized that wasn't going to help either of us. I finally figured out that I won't be able to forgive him for what he's done, let alone myself for not feeling anything for him, unless I'm willing to take the first step in trying to forgive him. After this realization, I texted my brother and let him know that I heard about his relapse and that he can talk to me whenever he needs me. He later replied saying that what I said meant a lot to him and that he loved me.

I believe that in the end my brother's addiction was handled well when he went to the rehabilitation center. However, I think that my parents should have sent him to a rehabilitation center sooner to help him break his addiction more easily. Also, if he went to a rehabilitation center earlier then he wouldn't have been able to hurt my family as much as he did and that he and I would have a better relationship than we do now. 🙏

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Jacob Frankenberry is a recent high school graduate from Wyoming. *Alert Magazine* congratulates him for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage him in the pursuit of his academic goals. We would also like to encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.