

# Candida's Personal Story

Let me introduce myself and share a little bit of my story. My name is Candida DePhilippo I am a recovering addict. I have been clean now for a little over 5 years and still counting! Yayyyy me! I am currently in school to be a Substance Use Counselor, as well as going for Business Management. I took this web design class when I was incarcerated for 4 years through M.I.T and my idea for this website is to create something for young adolescents who are struggling with various situations. Such as, homeless, being runaways, addicts/alcoholics or both. My intentions are pure and I want to help. I struggled with addiction beginning at the age of 9, I started smoking marijuana. Shortly after that, I was drinking and sneaking out to clubs and partying. I began to really dabble and misuse prescription pills at 16 as well as selling them to make money and support my habit, then that wasn't enough so I moved on to something I thought was better and way cheaper. Boy did I really think WRONG! It was just the Devil himself grasping me in his recklessness, abuse, and evilness in the form of Heroin and a syringe. I started to spiral downhill very quickly and starting losing all that I worked so hard for; my self respect, dignity, drive to want better for myself, my education, family, friends, my home I bought when I was 23, and even my own beautiful children.

However, I would like to mention that coming to prison for the first time in my life saved my life. I have done plenty of jail (county) time and that was not nearly long enough to make me change my ways. I would do three months here, 6 months there, quite a few times and still I was stuck in my ways. Finally, after spending a little over a year in county jail this previous time and being charged with Aggravated Assault with a deadly weapon and getting sentenced to five years in prison was definitely without a doubt my saving grace. Not many people will say that but I am so thankful. I was able to go back to college and earn two degrees and able to put my education to use! ☺ For once in my life, I am actually proud of my accomplishments and myself. In addition, I can say I do not just exist in life I am truly living!

Furthermore, I wish I could have known what I know now about drugs and maybe just maybe with the right help and support it would have slowed me down enough to stop, think, and get my stuff together before all of it disappeared in the blink of an eye! Thankfully, I do still have contact with one of my daughters that my aunt and uncle adopted. They are truly my strength and if not for them letting me still have contact with her and be in her life (even if it is just as Auntie Candida) I honestly do not know if I could have made it this far. Thank-you so much for taking the time to read this!

Sincerely,

Candida DePhilippo