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Memoir Essay
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addiction.

The fact or condition of being addicted to a particular substance, thing, or activity.

/ə'dikSH(ə)n/. noun. There is all kinds of addictions. You can be addicted to a substance, to a game, a person, to anything. The effects it can have can be ruthless. Anybody can fall victim to it in any shape or form. It ruins families and ends precious lives. Some people are able to quit and never look back. But many continuously relapse trying to escape it. I know people that have made it, and I unfortunately know people that never could. This is my story.

I've lost many people to this disease. My cousin, Nicholas Lucero was eighteen years old when he overdosed on heroin. He was a ruthless drug addict that desperately needed help. Many times he went to rehab but immediately relapsed coming out. One time it was just too much. Coming back from rehab he found old friends and got back into it. He passed out and never came to. I was only ten years old and didn't have a lot of understanding to what really happened. But, I knew from the beginning that Nick wasn't okay. That was the first death.

My uncle Anthony Lucero, which we informally called him Tio Tony, died the next year due to complications with his health. He was an alcoholic. It absolutely ruined him. His family split. His three girls who he loved more than anything were constantly kept away from him. Girls he met would eventually leave due to it. I was still very young and didn't understand the severity of what his life consisted of. He was the happiest, most loving man I've ever known and his life was falling apart. It's not till now that I can look back and see how bad things were for him. His death was especially hard for my family because he was incredibly

close to us. His three girls have been my best friends for my entire life. He brought so much joy among all of us and I think about him every day.

Addiction has always been a part of my life. Since I was little I learned what it is, and what it takes to quit. My dad is a recovering alcoholic. As of now he has sixteen years of sobriety. I am so incredibly proud of my dad for this. It has completely changed my family's lives in an infinite amount of ways. I couldn't imagine where my family would be if it wasn't for his determination to quit. It's very likely I would be living in a split family where I would spend most of my time with my mom and have no relationship with him. It's likely that I wouldn't be the person I have come to accept myself as today.

My dad tells me the story of the week he quit drinking, smoking, and drugs. He tells me that he took all the money we had and took my siblings to Disneyland; me being too little to go. This being a huge factor because I have no memory of him drinking. He told me one day coming home from a late night Jazz game about how things instantly changed for us and how he got a new job the same exact week. This job setting up for much bigger things down the line for my family. I remember just sitting there, looking forward, past the windshield with goosebumps all up my arms. He now owns his own business, has steady work, and is making big money. We live in an amazing house and live very comfortably. I know none of this could be possible if he was still drinking. I am so proud of him and his effort and determination has really made me who I am.

I am beyond thankful for the life I live today. I am excited for my future. I owe it all to my parents.