**Marisa Krause**

**Narrator**

**Amy Sullivan**

**Interviewer**

**December 30, 2016**

**Victoria, Minnesota**

Marisa Krause -**MK**

Amy Sullivan -**AS**

**AS**: This is Amy Sullivan in Victoria, Minnesota on December 30, 2016. I'm here at the childhood home of Marisa Krause. Marisa could you state your name and say whether you give permission for me to record this?

**MK**: I'm Marisa Krause and I give Amy Sullivan permission to record.

**AS**: Thank you. If you could just start by telling me how old you are, your birthday, whichever one you want to do. Then talk a little bit about your childhood. Your earliest memories, where you grew up, what life was like for you as a little girl.

**MK:** I'm 23. I just turned 23 in December and I grew up here in this house in Victoria. Childhood for me was good. I was adopted when I was five months old from Korea. As far back as I can remember my parents always gave my brother and I love. They always made sure that they told us that they were proud of us. That they love us and to keep focusing on what our long term life goals are. There was discipline in the home which I think is a very structural thing...I grew up with good parents. I grew up with very good parents. They love each other, they love their life, they love us kids, and there was nothing less than that in our home. I went to private school. I went to preschool, private school for K through 8 and then my freshman year I went to a Lutheran school for three months, and then I went to Catholic school for however long the school year is, the rest of it. Then sophomore year I went to public school and graduated from Chanhassen High School in 2012. In high school things were good. I was a three sport athlete and I loved playing sports. That was my life. I wasn't so good at academics.

**AS:** What did you play?

**MK**: Volleyball, basketball, and soccer. I kind of grew up playing these sports. My brother was an athlete in school as well. That was just something that we loved to do, play sports. We had a basketball hoop outside and we would shoot hoops outside after dinner.

**AS**: How old is your brother?

**MK**: He's 24 I think.

**AS:** You're a year apart.

**MK:** He'll be 25 in April. We're like a year and a half apart. We got along like siblings get along that close in age. We're two polar opposite people. He's very book smart, very into school. He's just very intelligent. I on the other hand was more of the social butterfly in school. I always wanted to go to parties on weekends or have friends over or go to friends’ houses. I met a lot of people through sports. When I was 16 years old I met a guy who I started dating and he was a marijuana dealer.

**AS:** How old was he?

**MK:** He was a year younger than I, so 15 at the time. It was my first boyfriend. My first really any sort of relationship. We were together for six and a half years. It was a whirlwind of a relationship. It started off unhealthy and it ended unhealthy. I got into a lot of trouble with him. I started partying a lot. I started skipping class, not going to practices for my sports. I just ended up quitting everything.

**AS**: By what? Your junior year?

**MK:** Yes, it was my junior year. Exactly. I would still play summer softball for the city. I grew up with a lot of girls around here; they were playing softball as well. We would do that in the summer. School wise, no sports anymore.

**AS:** What do you attribute that to?

**MK:** Really my attention was on my boyfriend. Those few hours after school that I would be at practice or a game or something like that I could be with him. I didn't want to take that time away from him and be doing something that I loved. I look back on it now and it's baffling to me that I would do that to myself. Now I watch games on the TV and I go, "Oh my gosh. If only." I think I could have gone to college for volleyball. That's what everybody said.

**AS:** Can we back up a minute? What did you mean by that it was unhealthy? Did you know it was? Is that in hindsight or did you know at the beginning that it was unhealthy?

**MK:** I knew at the beginning. When we first got together he was cheating on his girlfriend with me. They broke up and then we got together. For six and a half years it was him being unfaithful. I liked the lifestyle that he was living and I hadn't started drinking yet. I hadn't started smoking cigarettes yet or doing any sort of drugs or any substances. When I turned 17 that's when I got into the party thing with him and started drinking a lot. He would have friends that did cocaine and smoked weed and all this stuff. I did it all with him. Every single thing, every single substance that I've done, I've always done with him first. I've never done it by myself. It was always with him or his friends. With that, a couple years into our relationship my parents didn't like him from the start.

A couple years into our relationship I started getting into a lot of trouble with him. I would stay out past the curfew that I was given. Under 18 you have an 11 o'clock curfew or whatever. I would always be late for that. I ended up getting pulled over and got a curfew ticket. Which I think is funny now. I was out past 11. I would lie to them about where I was going and who I was going to be with. I was just getting into trouble with him. We went to a party one night and the next morning my dad was checking my spare tire in the trunk of my car and he found a loaded stolen pistol in there. It was one of my ex's friends who had brought it to that party. I didn't know because I was cleaning out my trunk that night, throwing things in the back seat. They must have just have tossed it in there when I wasn't looking. That morning, it was like a Sunday morning, we were going to church. I woke up to six squad cars in my driveway.

**AS:** How did that happen?

**MK:** My dad found it and he found a bottle of vodka back there too. I was drinking.

**AS:** Did he call the police on you then?

**MK:** Yes. Well he called my uncle who was a cop at the time. He was like, "I don't know what to do. What do I do?" My uncle just told him, "Don't touch it. Don't put any of your DNA, your fingerprints on it. Keep it there, call the police. I'm sorry to tell you this but Marisa probably will go to jail at 17 years old." So the cops came and they put me in handcuffs and I was bawling. I had just woken up. I didn't know it was there. I was trying to tell my dad that. Of course they're not going to believe me I was out until 2 o'clock in the morning.

**AS:** You already had a history of lying?

**MK:** Yes.

**AS:** Had they caught you in lies at this point?

**MK:** Oh yes. I think I'm slick but I'm not. [Laughs]. I try to be slick. I just begged my dad. I said, "Dad please, don't let them take me. I promise you I'll do whatever you want me to. I'll obey any rules that you have." Then my dad talked to the officer. They didn't take me but I didn't have a phone, I got my car taken away. I couldn't go out anywhere except to school. Like nothing. I had to be home by, school got out at 3:15, and I had to be home by 3:45. That's when a lot of things started to happen. Of course I didn't obey those rules for very long.

**AS**: How long do you think?

**MK:** Probably a week.

**AS:** You went from having a car, and a phone, and a very extensive social life...

**MK:** To nothing. I'm a very good manipulator. I got my dad to give me my car back. Then it was my car and then my cell phone, whatever else I could do to get myself out of this trouble I was in. I sweet talked him and I got everything back. It was the exact same the next week. It was parties and my boyfriend and people that I shouldn't be hanging out with I was hanging out with. Subconsciously I knew I shouldn't be hanging out with these people because of how I was raised and how they were raised. Meaning that I grew up in a really good home, I have a very put together family. They come from broken homes and they haven't had the best upbringing, childhood. Then I just started doing a bunch of cocaine and smoking a lot of weed every day, doing every drug under the sun that you could ever imagine at 17, 18 years old.

**AS**: How did you manage to graduate high school?

**MK**: I don't know. [Laughs]. I don't know. I honestly couldn't tell you. I know I had a 1.67 GPA. I got low Cs. I guess in high school that's passing. I didn't know that. I thought you had to have high Cs. I remember my graduation day. I had a bottle of vodka in the trunk of my car. It's June, it's hot out. Right after I walked across the stage I went out to my car and took a shot of vodka. My friends and I would always joke, "We're such alcoholics, we're such alcoholics." I didn't know what that meant at the time. I didn't know what addiction or alcoholism was because I don't have any in my family. I don't have any alcoholics or addicts in my family. All of the sudden here I am drinking right after I walk across the stage at graduation. I tried to go to college.

**AS**: Why does that stand out to you?

**MK:** Just because I was raised in such a good home and such a good family. I had discipline but it wasn't abuse which I always thought it was because I'm a teenager. I got what I wanted and needed and then some. I thought that people that were alcoholics and addicts were the ones that came from broken families, the ones that are homeless, and the ones that don't have any money. My parents work hard for what they have. They've worked hard their whole lives for what they have. I've always known that but I was like, "I can't be an alcoholic or an addict because my parents have money, because I've never been homeless or because I've never struggled with them.”

**AS**: That moment of going to the trunk of your car and drinking hot vodka. Why does that stand out to you? Is that a moment when you saw that you might have a problem?

**MK:** Yes. That's when I thought I had somewhat of a problem. I didn't have a problem. I had somewhat of a problem.

**AS:** What a good way to put it. That's how a lot of kids think about it.

**MK:** Right. I was 18 years old at the time. I'm 18; alcoholics aren't until they're like 60. You know what I mean? I remember that and then I tried to go to college at South Central Community College in Mankato. I got an apartment out there and a job out there and I was working full time. I never went to class. Ever. If I was at work I would go home and sleep and then go to a party that night. I would just not go to class. I would wake up on time but I wouldn't go to class.

I remember homecoming I was running down this hill with a bottle of vodka. I trip over my own feet and I tumble down this steep hill on the street. I woke up the next morning after homecoming weekend and I was just like, "Oh my God. I never want to do that again. I never want to drink like that ever again." I was telling my parents, "I'm not going to class. I don't enjoy going to class. I don't have any friends out here really. I have a couple but they're actually going to school and doing the right thing." [Laughs]. They're actually enrolled in college and going and they're going to graduate unlike me. I went to class maybe one day, the first day of school. I hated it. I moved back to my parents.

**AS:** Was that one semester?

**MK:** Yes. I was still with the boyfriend. That's really when I turned 19, no I turned 20 I think. Then I moved back here and I started partying again, doing a lot of drugs. Whenever I was at home with my family or whenever we would have a family get together I would always just leave. I wouldn't stay. I wouldn't be paying attention to anybody. I wouldn't be caring about anybody or anything like that. I think about it now and I feel very guilty about that. I started doing heroin in February of 2014.

**AS:** How did that come about?

**MK:** My boyfriend had been doing it for a few years before that. I had never been exposed to it or anything. I caught him actually in my bathroom by my bedroom doing it. I remember...

**AS:** Were your parents home?

**MK**: No. I would never bring him over when they were home. When I knew that they left for the cabin or out of town that's when he would come over. I was really close with his family and I was welcome there at any time. I caught him in my bathroom doing it. I was mad and I was hurt because he had been lying to me. Then one day we were at his friends house and I was like, "Let me try it. You're doing it and I don't see you do it and not me. We've done everything together."

**AS:** He didn't want you to try it?

**MK:** Nope. He didn't. I think he low-key did but he didn't put it out like that. His friends were telling me, "Don't do it. Don't do it." I did it and I remember that night I was driving home. I didn't really feel it. I didn't feel any different. I was driving home and I was like a block down the road and I thought, "Marisa just make it home, make it home." My stomach was turning and I was going to get sick. Right as I'm pulling in the driveway I threw up all over myself in my car, all over the steering wheel, all over my clothes. I'm trying to take off my clothes in the garage before I come inside. It's like 3 o'clock in the morning. My mom was standing there, "Where have you been?"

**AS:** So at this point you didn't have a curfew?

**MK:** No. We had a conversation when I went to college. I told them, "Mom, Dad I'm kind of sick of having this curfew. I'm 18 years old now. I'm an adult." They're like, "Alright you can make your own decisions as you want to. You get in trouble you're going to have to deal with the consequences." I was like, "Ok, no problem." I didn’t think I would be getting in trouble. I thought I was slick. [Laughs]. I threw up all over myself. I walked in the house buck naked. I told my mom, "I spilt a Coke on myself." I remember going to bed and I don't remember how I got up to my room or anything like that. I woke up the next morning and I was like, "Oh my God. Why do I feel like I need to do that again? I've never felt that."

**AS:** That quickly.

**MK:** I was smoking weed, doing coke; I never woke up the next morning and wanted to do it again. It would just be on weekends.

**AS:** Can I ask you a question? Did you ever take pain pills for recreation use?

**MK:** Nope.

**AS:** You went straight to injecting?

**MK**: I didn't inject. I smoked. I was doing uppers like cocaine. I would smoke weed which kind of just puts you to sleep, other than that no pain pills.

**AS:** That wasn't your route into using heroin. It was just...

**MK:** I was exposed to cocaine and then I was exposed to heroin which is uncommon. Usually it is pain pills or like my parents had surgery or something or my grandma had surgery and I'm going to take their pain pills. None of that. I never was a pill popper or anything like that. I never found that enjoyable. When I started smoking heroin the next morning, it was barely even 12 hours after that. I was like, "Oh my God I need to do this every day." I was working in Chaska and my boyfriend lived across the street. I remember I would just call him every day at work, "You need to come to the parking lot. Let's go for a cruise." Meaning that we're going to get high. "I have a half hour lunch break. We can just drive down the road."

**AS:** You'd get high and come back to work?

**MK:** I'd get high in the morning before I'd go to work. I'd go to work for a few hours, have a lunch break and then get high in the parking lot of work.

**AS:** And then after work probably?

**MK:** Then after work of course.

**AS:** What were you doing? What was your job?

**MK:** I was working at a call center, sitting there talking on the phone all day.

**AS:** To who? For what?

**MK:** It was called Heartland America in Chaska. It was a magazine company.

**AS:** Did it require much...

**MK:** Nothing.

**AS:** …Thought.

**MK:** No, no thought. You need to know how to type numbers and work a computer basically which I'm very good at. Nobody knew, none of my friends knew, none of my coworkers knew, none of my family knew. I kept it very under wraps. I was using for a few months. April is my brother’s birthday and we went out to dinner for his birthday with my family. I decided to leave early because I just thought, "Why do I need to be here?" I don'tlike my family at this point. I don't have anything in common with them. I was playing the victim.

**AS:** The outsider.

**MK:** Yes. I left and I went to my friend's house who's also a user. I ended up that night getting into a fight with a girl and I guess hurt her severely. We were doing a drug deal. It was a drug deal gone bad basically. I fought her and she ended up going to the hospital with a broken face basically. I was arrested that night and I remember calling my mom from the Scott County Jail at 4:30 in the morning. I called her and said, "Mom." She's like, "Where are you?" "I'm in Scott County Jail." "You're where?" "I'm at Scott County Jail. My car's getting impounded. I don't know what to tell you." "What do we need to do?" "You need to get a lawyer and come get me out of here." I ended up sitting in there for a few days. I was released without a bail hearing or anything. I really don't know what happened. I don't think that it was because of any human power. I think it's because of God that I wasn't charged with anything. To this day I do not have any charges on my record.

**AS:** The girl didn't press charges?

**MK:** She was going to press charges but she didn't know who I was. She didn't have a name, she didn't have an address, and she didn't have anything. With her injuries the state picked it up and the state didn't have any proof. They weren't there. They just had no evidence. I wasn't charged with anything, thank God. That could have been some serious jail time. My charges were aggravated robbery and assault even though I didn't use any weapons.

**AS**: You were never...

**MK:** I was never charged.

**AS**: What was the robbery?

**MK**: I stole $80 from her and I broke her phone.

**AS**: Do you remember doing this?

**MK:** No. I remember leaving but I don't remember why I decided to hit her. [Laughs]. Then that's when my parents really are like, "What are you doing?" I got released from jail, I came home. Before my dad picked me up I walked down the street to my friend's house to get high and then I walked back to the jail so I looked like I just got out of jail. I was out for a couple hours. I know.

**AS:** Did you get dope sick in there?

**MK**: I was kicking in there and I was dope sick. To me jail for an addict is the worst place to be. Especially if it's an addict that doesn't want to get clean. I met a lot of people in there that are users that gave me numbers to all these people where I could get drugs for really cheap. It was really good. Of course I take with me out of jail and I use those resources. That's when my parents really found out. I told them I had been using heroin with my ex, with my boyfriend.

**AS:** That was in April?

**MK:** Yes. Then in May I got pulled over in Bloomington. My boyfriend had gotten into a fight in a parking lot and we got pulled over and the officer called my dad and he searched my car and found paraphernalia. Still no charges, he didn't arrest me. He just called my dad, "Can we search your daughter’s car? She said no but you're the owner of this car." My dad's like, "Yes of course." I'm like, "Oh crap. No! Dad don't say yes." The officer's like, "Your dad said yes." They found paraphernalia; they found a scale because my boyfriend and I were selling at this time. They told my dad and my dad told the officer just to leave the car on the side of the road, he'd come pick it up, take the keys with to the station and he'll come get the keys. I remember the officer's name was Sergeant Williams and he told me, "Your dad told me to take the car." All of this paraphernalia is ours obviously. We walked from Bloomington to our friends’ house a few miles down the road. My dad was telling me, "You need to be home in an hour." "Well Dad you took my car. How am I supposed to get home?" "You'll figure it out." I was like, "Man I am in trouble."

I pull in six hours later. My mom is standing out by the front door with a list. I get out of my friends car and she's like, "Marisa." I remember this is the first thing she said. "I know you and Andre are having sex but I just want you to know that birth control is free on our insurance." I'm like, "Ok. Alright. Whatever." She's like, "I know that you've been doing something that you're not supposed to be doing and you can take one of two choices. You can leave Andre and have your family and we'll help you or you can go with him and continue on what you're doing but we have no contact with you, you are completely cut off. Your phone's cut off, you don't have a car. You can pack what you can in a backpack in 20 minutes and you can leave. I was like, "How are you going to make me choose between my boyfriend who I've been with for four and a half years now and my family who I grew up with?" My mom was like, "I don't know what to tell you. It's up to you." I was like, "Alright I pick my boyfriend. See you later." I packed my backpack and I left and walked down the street about a mile and a half and had a friend pick me up and take me back to my boyfriend's house.

**AS:** How did you have a friend pick you up?

**MK:** I used a gas station phone. He came and picked me up and brought me back to my boyfriend's house. His mom told me that I could stay there for a little bit, temporarily not for a while. I stayed there and we continued to do what we were doing. A few weeks after that I was waking up to go to work and I took a shower and was getting dressed. I walked out of the bathroom in a towel into our room and I hear a big knock on the door. I look outside and there's nobody there. Then I just here the door bust down. It's the task force.

**AS:** Who's the task force?

**MK:** The drug, the police and the drugs and all that stuff. They're searching through; they put us all in handcuffs. I'm in a towel sitting on the couch. My boyfriend's older brother lived there, his mom, his sister, and then his nephew was there as well. We were selling and we were all sitting on the couch in handcuffs and the police were searching our room. They flipped everything upside down. They found some old foils and straws and stuff. They were trying to tell us, they talked to all of us individually and they said that if we would give up the name of the person we were buying from that they would let us free, we wouldn't have any charges. Basically if we were to snitch then we wouldn't have any charges. We agreed to it and we were supposed to contact him the next time we went to our dealer's house.

**AS:** Every single person agreed to it individually?

**MK**: Yes. Well it was really just me and my boyfriend. They knew his mom wasn't using or his brother wasn't using. They knew our names; they knew we were pretty big dealers around this area. They knew our names. We agreed to it and we were supposed to contact them when we went to our dealer's house next. We never did and never did and never did. No charges were filed once again. I don't understand still, I don't understand any of that still. I just remember when I started doing heroin my boyfriend and I were arguing a lot about money, about drugs, about everything. He was still being unfaithful and cheating on me and all that stuff. I remember one day, this was in May and then June, nothing much happened in June. Just the same thing, using, dealing, using, dealing, stealing from anybody and anywhere that we could.

**AS:** Were you still living at his mom's?

**MK:** After the raid she kicked us out so we were kind of couch surfing with his friends and some of my friends that were using. It wasn't fun.

**AS:** Did you have any contact with your parents during this time?

**MK:** No.

**AS:** How long?

**MK:** It was like a good two and a half months. I would call them every once and awhile and just say I'm alive. I never told them where I was or who I was staying with or what I was doing or any of that. July comes around...it was June or July. I was at work. I used a work phone to call my mom because I was really sick. I was dope sick. I called my mom and I said, "Mom I don't know if you still want me in your life at all but I need help. I need you to come get me from work right now." She came speeding in the parking lot and slammed on her brakes and she said that she had an assessment set up for me at Hazelden so I could go and check it out. They would let me know if I could get in. I went with her and I don't remember the assessment at all. All I remember was on our way back home I told her that I need to go to my boyfriend's house and get my stuff. She said, "No, we'll get it later. We don't need to do that now." She was afraid I was going to get high which I of course was. I jumped out of the car with my mom going 60 miles per hour. I jumped out of the car and tucked and rolled. My mom slammed on the brakes and I just remember the look on her face when I looked back. I was running from her. I remember I looked back and the look on her face I've never seen my mom that upset and I never want to ever again. I think that's really when she was saying goodbye to me. I should have died. I should have died jumping out of that car. I should have died using. I should have died hanging out with the people I was hanging out with.

A few days after that I told my mom, "I'm actually ready. Here's the address where I'm at. Come get me. Have a bag packed just what I need and we'll get the other stuff later." She did, she came through and I went to Hazelden. I don't remember getting there. I really don't remember much of what happened there. I do remember learning the 12 Steps and thinking that this is complete bullshit. Bullshitting my whole way through my first step and every assignment they had me do. They wanted me to stay 60 days. I said, "Fuck you." I left at 27 days. I couldn't even stay another day to make it 28. I walked out of Hazelden, I sat by the sign. It's June or July and it's like 91 degrees but it’s cold in the building. I was wearing leggings and a sweater. All my stuff was packed in my bag and a lady from across the street came in her car and said, "Can I take you somewhere?" "Just take me to the nearest gas station. Get me out of here." Her husband I guess had been through Hazleton a few years back. She took me to a gas station. I called a friend and my friend came to pick me up. I had all the intent of staying clean. I had all the intentions of not using or not drinking. I didn't want to go back to the way that I was. It happened and I relapsed that day.

**AS:** Did you talk to your mom before you left?

**MK**: Yes.

**AS:** She knew you were going to leave.

**MK:** I talked to her and I said, "Mom I'm sick of this." She said, "You're not welcome here. You're going to have to figure it out. Right now this is the best place for you. You have a roof over your head, you have three meals a day, and you have a shower, all this stuff." That wasn't enough to stop me. I was out for three weeks and in that three weeks my boyfriend and I had broken up.

**AS:** You were out?

**MK:** I was out using three weeks after I left Hazleton. My boyfriend and I broke up and I was still getting high as a kite everyday by myself, doing it alone. On the streets sleeping outside, sleeping under bridges, sleeping wherever I could that was decently warm.

**AS:** Did you stay around in the suburban areas?

**MK:** Yes. I called my mom and she took me back. I don't why...my counselor David at Hazleton when I got back he made me write a paper to get accepted back in to be able to go back. What I'm willing to do. I guess my paper was good enough for him to accept me back. He asked me, "To what lengths are you willing to go to stay sober?" I said, "I'll do anything. Just help me." He said, "Ok. Are you willing to be honest this time?" I said, "Yes." I did a complete first step as thoroughly and honest as I could be.

**AS:** What was it that made you go back? What happened?

**MK:** I don't know. I was just sick of it. It was exhausting. I wasn't sleeping. When I relapsed I had relapsed and I was using meth as well which is something that I never thought I would use. As a teenager I was, "Those are dirty drugs. Those are for disgusting people." They are dirty drugs. They're disgusting. I went back and I was honest and I built relationship with a lot of the girls there.

It was my three week mark back at Hazelden and David pulled me into his office and said, "To what lengths are you willing to go to stay sober?" "I'll do anything." "Anything?" "Yes. Why do you keep asking me this?" "Well we think that you need a higher level of care. We want to send you out to New Found Life in California." "Ok, pause. Not going out of state. I'm staying in Minnesota where my family is, where my friends are, where I grew up." He's like, "Ok just think about it." I talked to a couple different counselors at Hazelden about what I should do. I woke up one morning and I ran to David's office and I said, "David I'm ready to go. I'm willing to go." We called my mom and told her, "I need a plane ticket. I'm leaving on Friday." I packed my bags; I left that Friday and was off to California. When I got to California I committed to doing there that treatment center they brought us to AA meetings. We had to call two more alcoholics and addicts a day before we could make any more personal calls to family. You couldn't sit down when you smoked which I thought was stupid.

**AS:** Why was that?

**MK:** I don't know because they think it's lazy which I kind of agree it is. I don't know.

**AS:** But you could smoke which is different from Hazelden.

**MK:** Exactly. When I was talking to the intake at New Found Life they were like, "Our facility is right on the beach. We go to the beach a lot. We take the girls there. You can go on beach walks. We have beach meetings." I get there and there's like a large fence in front of the house where you can't go out to the beach. The beach is like across the street. I was so angry.

One of my friends from Hazelden was actually at that treatment center as well. We were trying to make this plan to leave. We were going to take all the change we had in our bags and go live on the beach and be beach bums.

**AS:** So you didn't quite have your brain back yet?

**MK:** No, not at all. I don't know what it was there either that I was like, "Let me try." My 21st birthday came along and my mom came out. I was able to spend a lot of time with her outside of treatment. We got to a mall, went to get massages. That day we sat down with my case manager.

**AS:** Were you still planning to leave at this point?

**MK:** Not so much. I was more okay with it. Obviously I still wanted to leave but I wasn't like, "Let's jump the fence." My mom came out; we talked to my case manager. My case manager, "Alright Marisa you've done your two months here. It's up to you now what you want to do. What's up?" My mom said, "It's your decision if you want to come back home and do sober living, if you want to stay out here." All I remember is saying, "You're crazy Mom. I'm staying out here. I don't care if I have to stay here longer and go to sober living out here. I'm not going home." I remember looking at her and I was like, "What did I just say? Crap! What did I just say? What am I doing?" My mom started crying of course because she was so excited. I ended up staying two and a half more months in New Found Life.

**AS:** In treatment?

**MK:** Yes.

**AS:** How many months of treatment were you in?

**MK:** Total it was four and a half...five and a half. I went to sober living in Long Beach, California.

**AS:** Can you tell me first of all were you on medication assisted treatment? Did you get Vivitrol?

**MK:** I did get Vivitrol. I got Vivitrol the week that I left Hazelden. I continued it out in California. Every month I would go, in treatment they would take me to the doctor to get my shot and have assessment. "How's it working for you? What do you feel?" When I went to sober living I continued Vivitrol for another...I was on it a total of 13 months.

**AS:** How was it for you?

**MK:** It was good. I did see a difference. When I first got it I felt really sick, I felt tired, I felt icky. After like the second, third month I felt like myself. I didn't have any cravings once you hit that 28 day mark you'd be like, "Oh my God."

**AS:** It would come back?

**MK:** It would come back and it would hit hard, when I was going to meetings with the girls in my treatment that would help it a lot. Then I would go back to the doctor and get another shot. It really helped me. I recommend it to all my friends in treatment. Still even the girls that are at this treatment center now I recommend to them. I was scared too though. I was like, "I don't want to be on this and have it be like my crutch. I want to be able to do this part by myself with the help of a program."

Sober living was hard too. I didn't really get along with the house owner. Actually there were a lot of times when we bumped heads. I got a job, a get well job. I had a couple of them.

**AS:** What kind of a job?

**MK:** A get well job. It's just like a little minimum wage...

**AS:** They call it a get well job?

**MK:** Yes, it makes you feel...before I was making $600 a week at my job before treatment. There I was making maybe $100 every two weeks. It makes you humble. I needed to find out my own ride to work and home from work. I worked at Coldstone and I hated it. It was on the beach and it was busy. There were a lot of people and it was hot. I was doing it because I needed to learn how to live in society again. I had a couple get well jobs before I got my year. September 19 is my sobriety date, 2014. September 14, 2015 comes around that quick. Then I was working in treatment.

**AS:** You were working at the...

**MK:** I was working at a treatment center in Costa Misa. Not the one I went to, all females, just as support staff. I got to share my experience with them every day. I got to encourage them to keep going on the path of recovery. I think really working in treatment and seeing it from a different side has really helped me in my recovery. I know how I was but not everybody's like me. There's a lot of people that really want it and that are really willing to do anything.

**AS**: You were resistant for a while?

**MK**: For a while, a long time.

**AS:** You were in for four and half months...did you say four and a half or five and a half?

**MK:** Total five and a half.

**AS:** Was there a point where you really started accepting yourself as a person with addiction? You can say that you did the first step but is there a point during that time where you felt more secure in your recovery or did that happen outside of treatment later?

**MK:** It happened in treatment because I remember asking the question, "How do you know if you're an addict or an alcoholic?" The only answer I would get every single time is, "Normal people don't end up in treatment multiple times. Normal people don't end up in treatment at all." That's when I was like, "That makes sense. I'm not normal." I was journaling a lot in treatment. I was really looking closely at my patterns in my life. If I didn't get something that I wanted I would throw a fit. We have home video of me having fits, laying on the ground rolling around.

**AS:** One of the questions I was going to ask you when we first started, you went on to another topic and I decided not to interrupt you, this gets back to what were you like as a child?

**MK**: Very needy. If I didn't get something I wanted I would throw a temper tantrum. It was always more, I always needed more. More makeup as a three year old, prettier dresses, more dolls, more bags, more food, more candy, everything was more.

**AS:** You just had a hole.

**MK:** Everything was more. I thought at that time it was because I was bored and I was a kid. What else am I supposed to do besides eat and play with my dolls? I would scream and I would cry.

**AS:** You remember that?

**MK:** Yes. I remember my dad bought me a very, it was an expensive dress, red with pearl buttons on it. I loved it because when I would twirl around in it would look like a big Cinderella gown. I absolutely loved it. I remember one day I wore it to church and I went home and I ripped all the buttons off of it, I was throwing them all over my room. I tore the dress off because I didn't get something that I wanted. I wasn't a fun kid to be around even in my teen years everything was my way or the highway, whether it was with my family or my friends or my boyfriend, very controlling.

**AS**: You worked a program; you worked a twelve-step program. How was that? Are there parts of that that have helped you outside of just dealing with sobriety?

**MK:** Absolutely. I think that the twelve steps aren't just to be applied to people who are getting sober. I think that if everybody in this world were to work the twelve steps of whatever kind you want to, the world would be such a better place. Just because it's taught me how to live again and it's taught me how to be a good person. It's taught me how to get down on my knees every day and pray and not just for the things that I want. Thanking my higher power for what I have and where I'm at in life. Apologizing to people when I need to and accepting people as who they are for whatever they did and not playing the victim. Just looking at myself instead of other people and judging myself instead of other people. Everybody has a story to tell. You never know what somebody else is going through. If everybody in this world were to work a twelve step program and actually work it and do the things they say they're going to do I really think that the hatred in this world would go away. It's gone away in my heart.

I can actually sit down and have a conversation with my mom now. I can sit down and have a conversation with my dad. My grandma just turned 90 on December 27 and her siblings were there that are close to her age and smell like old people [Laughs] and I was able to sit down and have a conversation with them and ask them how they're doing and how their lives are. I got to ask my grandma, "What was your favorite memory of your life?" And actually listening to what she had to say instead of going, "Oh ok. I didn't really mean to ask that question."

**AS:** Or even that you would sit down.

**MK:** That I would even actually seem like I cared but I actually do genuinely care for people now these days. It's easier for me now to take time out of my day just to talk to you rather than really not having anything else to do but just leaving the house and doing nothing.

**AS:** Just to leave.

**MK:** Right, just to say I'm doing something but I'm really not doing anything. I have genuine friends in my life now. My best friend who I live with in California she has a two and a half year old son and I'm trusted with him alone at the house. I'm trusted driving with him and picking him up from school and dropping him off at school. He loves me as much as I love him. I've never felt so much love for my best friend and her son in my whole entire life.

**AS:** That is so neat. Did you meet her in treatment?

**MK:** No, funny story. She went to my high school out here in Minnesota. She moved to Kentucky. She was friends with my ex-boyfriend but I had never met her before. She added me on Facebook and we kind of started chatting. She's been with me my whole journey of sobriety and even before that. She knew me when...we would Facetime when I was getting high. At that time we had never met face to face. When I moved out to Long Beach when I got into sober living she had moved out to California as well to her dad's house. I come to find out her dad lived right around the corner from my sober living. We got to meet in person after three and a half years of being friends on technology, Facebook, Facetime, Instagram. We've been inseparable. We live together now. We've lived together since last May. We go to school together. We're going to school to be nurses now.

**AS:** So you're in school. When did that start?

**MK:** In November. I have a 3.0 GPA.

**AS:** Congratulations.

**MK:** I'm in the medical field and the medical field is hard. I was going to school for just general education in college and I didn't even feel like I could do that.

**AS:** You focused back and your brain and your life are back. You just didn't know you could do it? What do you attribute it to?

**MK:** I didn't believe in myself enough. I didn't believe I could take the time out of my day to sit and study for 8 hours. That's a huge blessing. I live in a beautiful house on the golf course in Yukipa, California. I drive a nice car. By next year I'll have my license as a nurse. It's crazy to see where I was sleeping under bridges and outside. Being able to take a shower every day and put makeup on and brush my teeth every day. When I went to Hazelden the first time I took my hair out of a bun after not showering for a month and a half and it was dreaded. I honest to God thought I would have to shave my head. Now it's like I have my family in my life. My mom's my best friend. She trusts me to drive her car when I'm home.

**AS:** You don't take that for granted. It's still special.

**MK:** They're letting me go out for New Year’s tomorrow night with some friends. They're not questioning about where I'm going. They asked me one time where I'm going and who I'm going to be with. It's not, "What time are you going to be home? Who are you going with? What's their phone number? What's their address?" I feel like I have my space as much as I'm giving them their space. We're still able to come together as a family and enjoy time together.

**AS:** Do you ever worry about relapse?

**MK:** All the time, all the time. I got asked the other days if I have cravings. Not really. But just because I don't have cravings doesn't mean I couldn't go out and pick up something. It doesn't mean I don't want it. That was part of my life, it was a short amount of time I was using heroin, but it was a part of my life for that long. Really the thing that I don't...I could lose my car, I could lose my house, I could lose going to school, I could lose the clothes that I have, but I never want to lose my family again.

**AS:** What advice would you give to a parent who finds out that their child is using heroin, let's just keep it to heroin? What advice would you give to a parent now?

**MK**: To a parent?

**AS:** Someone comes to you and tells you, "I've just found out my daughter's using heroin."

**MK:** Honestly I would tell them...what a lot of parents are being told these days is it's not your fault, you didn't do this to them. I would give them my phone number if their child would ever want to call me and talk. Tell them to keep their boundaries strong and do what they have to do or do what they think is right. I hate to say this but most of the time parents are right. Parents have a very good intuition and what their gut tells them is probably what is right. I don't have kids of my own but I am starting to feel that with my best friend's son. He asks me to do something if I feel like he shouldn't do it I'm like, "No. You can’t do that." Let them know that there's other parents out there too. I'd give them my mom's phone number. My mom doesn't care. I'm very open with my mom; she's very open with me. She asks me for my permission to give someone my phone number after the fact that she's given them my phone number. As long as I can help somebody and as long as I'm helping my family help other people I'm good with that.

**AS:** Do you have a sponsor and are you a sponsor?

**MK:** I do have a sponsor and I don't have any sponsees right now but I have in the past. It's hard right now with school.

**AS**: It's a commitment.

**MK:** Not that if someone were to ask me I'd say no. That's important and I honestly think that helping someone else with their sobriety and helping them get their life back is more important than me going to school at this very second. Do I think it's important for me to go to school? Yes, but when somebody's life is involved that's really become important to me.

**AS:** Have you had the same sponsor?

**MK:** I switched sponsors when I had five months clean. I've had the same sponsor ever since then. I love her. My life is good.

**AS:** That's great.

**MK:** It's very good.

**AS:** Anything else that you've got?

**MK**: No.

**AS:** I think that's good. I'm really happy for you and I'm happy to see you so happy.

**MK:** Thank you. It hasn't been easy, it's been hard but it's been worth and I know there's a lot more hard work to be done.

**AS:** Thank you Marisa.

**MK**: You're welcome.