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Season 01. Episode 05

Podcast Title: Progress of Addiction, Interview with Tony

For today's episode, I'm going to interview a fantastic young man, Tony, who has one heckuva story to tell about his own journey to getting clean and sober.

You will find the story of his personal adventures before and after very instructive and illuminating from this perspective: if you are a family member, a mom, wife, husband, brother, son, any person close to the addict or alcoholic still using or drinking or both, then pay attention to the effect that Johnny's active using had on his family. And pay attention to what they tried that didn't work.

Pay attention to what it took to turn his life around and what he does today to stay clean and sober.

This terrific young man whom I've come to know and admire is 27 years old, educated, fiercely intelligent, ambitious and clean cut, typical of what a young male addict looks like today – difference being that he is living a clean and sober,

purposeful life. Which also means that he looks just like the son of typical parents of a using addict in today's world, except for the clean and sober part.

Tony, welcome to the mike side of our podcast.

T: Thank you. Privileged to be here, Bruno.

B: As you know, Tony, since you're also the producer of our podcast series, our purpose is to help families understand the mind of an active addict or alcoholic, what drives them to do what they do, and what families actually could do to help an addict into recovery one way or another.

So let's start with a brief history of you and your family life back in the UK, let's say up to the point where you started using. Would you say your family was typical of the place and time?

T: My family was very ordinary and very normal, a loving mum and a dad who provided for us very well. I cannot point back and say that they did anything or neglected to do something that might have caused me to try drugs and later start drinking massive quantities of alcohol.

I did reasonably well in school, had lots of friends and so on, so I surely looked normal from the outside.

B: What were the circumstances that had you start using and/or drinking...how old were you and what were you doing at the time, did you have a circle of using buddies?

T: Like any so-called normal kid, I had a friendship group of a handful of friends, mostly boys, and one day somebody got ahold of some marijuana and eventually almost everyone in my group started smoking it. Got to the point where I was smoking it every day almost at the age of 16 or 17.

B: Talk about the progression of your addiction...were you also drinking, and what drug or drugs did you start with and what combinations of drugs did you end up using and what were you trying to get to? Did you try to stop on your own?

T: So, by university time, say about 2 years in, I was up to a quart, or a 750ml of vodka every day. I would wake up sober, go to class, study and then start drinking

in the evening and by the time I crashed, pretty much had polished off almost a quart of vodka, along with being stoned most of the day.

B: What about your parents? What was their reaction/emotional state as a result of your using and in what ways did you BS them, or involuntarily hurt them? Did they try to control your using, did they enable you?

T: Looking back, I cannot believe how much my parents worried and cared and sacrificed to help me get clean and sober. They literally drained their savings and equity in their home and then some to pay for all those rehabs. But I liked drinking repeat I liked drinking so I drank within days of leaving a 90 day rehab.

B: What ultimately caused you to wake up...did I hear you say that you gave sobriety a try more than once?

T: I had been to many rehabs – 5 or 6 or so, and I always went right back to drinking. BUT, one day a counselor put his arm around me and said “what have you got to lose going to this place in Thailand?” Something inside me said...I’m done fighting everyone. I was ready.

B: How long have you been clean and sober now, and what are you doing differently this time ... this is where we all need to pay attention, right?

While you’re at it, tell us about your role here at SafeHouse Rehab Thailand.

T: I’ve been clean and sober over 2 years now and I say this to anyone or any parent of an addict/alcoholic: you have to WANT IT, and then you have to DO IT, that is follow the suggestions and take the actions and you WILL you WILL succeed.

These days, I’m deeply involved in almost every aspect of operating SafeHouse Rehab Thailand, and I am given a great amount of freedom to do what needs to be done. I am a trusted partner in our client care program, from intake process to orientation to things like producing content like this podcast.

B: Tony, if you had a message to the parents or other loved ones of an alcoholic, what are the, say 3 most important things to know that will help them help an addict into recovery?

T: First, as I said, your addict will use every excuse in the book to keep using. Make it really hard for him to get what he wants...which is your money mostly. Two: let him know you WILL support him IF he is serious about treatment.

Three: make sure he WANTS IT...if he feels like he is being pushed, be careful, but always always let him know you love him or her, but will not support unhealthy choices.

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