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Season 06. Episode 03

Podcast Title: Interview with Adam - Part 1

This is episode 3 (Part 1 of 2) of season 6.

This interview with Adam N. is a telling example of how a young life could have been lost had it not been for a fateful event that turned the young man's life around at the last minute.

Part One of this interview starts with the question: "What do you think started you on your drinking and using career?"

Adam: " I think the consistent theme throughout my life up until the point where I surrendered and begged for help was the burning resentment, I carried toward my father for not being a father to me.

I always felt abandoned. Just when I thought he would start to care for me in the way that a young child wanted, he would walk away. I idolized my dad and then he would dash my hopes.

That sort of non-relationship ultimately meant that it made it hard for me to trust anyone. I could not trust my dad to really care for me and take care of me. I kept my feelings of anger toward my dad inside of me and I ended paying the price for bottling them tightly the way I did.

What I later discovered was that I really did not even know **what** I was feeling at all. I just felt a lot of rage a lot of the time, but beyond that one big emotion, I had no idea of the many subtle ways that feelings can manifest themselves.

For example, I learned in therapy about the main primary feelings. I could ask myself: am I mad, glad, sad, afraid, ashamed or hurt? And then I could talk about what was happening that I could associate with those feelings. When a friend left to go away to school, was I Mad? Sad? Glad? Hurt?

I later - much later - realized I was hurt because I felt abandoned, even though there was no objective reason to feel that way. I was unfairly projecting my feelings onto my friend, and then this feeling provoked a resentment which ultimately hurt a relationship that I wanted and valued. My twisted interpretation of reality sabotaged my chances of a healthy friendship.

After I sobered up many years later, I also came to understand how self-centred my worldview really was. I saw everything in light of how it affected me, just me. I never ever thought about how my crazy and irresponsible behaviour affected my mother or even my dad who must have suffered more than I realized.

I had what some people might say was an unusual upbringing. I am a British citizen and grew up in an Islamic family in Dubai. My family is of Indian descent, so we blended in Hinduism, but when I was running around as a kid in Dubai, I attended every type of house of worship, all depending on what friends I was hanging around with

that weekend, including Jewish temples, Catholic and Protestant churches, Mosques, Hindi temples, and a Bahai temple.

Dubai was an unbelievably permissive society and very affluent so you can see there were a ton of easy temptations all over the place, from school to street.

There was also a time when my family spent some time in Zanzibar, of all places. Zanzibar is a beautiful island off the coast of Tanzania in the Indian Ocean. I was just a little kid and all I remember is the beach and the ocean and the few times I got to play in the water with my dad.

I do know that all the time I was in Dubai, I desperately wanted to be liked by others, and I would become a chameleon just to fit in. So, I never did develop a sense of my own persona.

All the while in this fluid world of people coming and going, I craved the love of my dad perhaps because my world was such an unsettled place; I need stability and even though I was close to my mother and sisters, there was still the need for the firm hand of guidance of father.

So, my escape from the uncertainty and lack of love was at the age of thirteen inhaling butane, then glue, then drinking in bars, paying off the bouncers to get in.

Of course, now I was out of control; but in a juvenile way, going to school but stealing from florists and supermarkets.

Hashish at fifteen in Dubai, then back to the UK in 1999. Feeling even more isolated as a person of colour but found a peer group with whom I got drunk every weekend. Tried Ecstasy at the age of sixteen.

My school years were so-so. At first, I did well, but then I was kicked out of college because I had devoted my entire life to drugs and alcohol. Booze was my drug of choice. I would always start there. and go on to whatever else was available.

I did not know it then, but I was on a long slide to the gates of hell, and had it not been for a moment bent on self-destruction, I would not have lived to tell the story".

Postscript: this ends part one of Adam's story where he describes his descent; in part two he talks about how his ride downward actually accelerated until his crash at the bottom, and what his life in recovery is like today.