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Season 04. Episode 05

Podcast Title: Interview with Tomas - Personal Adventures Before We Woke Up

Tomas, I want to make this into two episodes while we have you here with us today. The first episode we will devote to the part where we call our personal adventures before we woke up.

I would like the second half to be about what happened to wake you up, how you are staying clean and sober today, and what your ambitions for the future are. I would also like our audience to know more about how Al Anon has helped you and your family if that's the case.

B: Walk us through your early years and how you first discovered the mind-altering substance that started you on the path.

T: I lived in a home where both parents were alcoholic in the extreme and everything around me steered me into alcohol and drugs.

B: How, if in any way, did your use of your drug of choice (if you got there by now) affect your education, your job, your family, your friends?

I would rather tell you about the internal damage that living in a family like that caused. Fact is, nobody, nobody, ever told the truth about anything, especially about what they were actually feeling.

So, what I learned to do early on was to hide, deny, suppress, lie about what I was feeling, and what I was feeling was tremendous hurt over not being cared for by my family.

I learned to isolate myself from my feelings on the one hand and seek the company of others on the other hand.

B: What types of drugs were you using and how much. and how frequently?

T: I didn't start drinking until I was in my twenties and I was on my way to establishing a career as a DJ in the hip hop scene in Europe.

B: What happened to have you stop; did you hit the well-known bottom? Did you get it the first time, or did you also relapse?

I was surrounded by a family who didn't know how to stop since they had no understanding of what not drinking and using looked like.

But there did come a time when I said I cannot stand the pain of whatever I was feeling; I had such a heavy heart and believed that there was something much better for me out there; I just didn't know what.

I thought I was going to explode. I ran into a couple who mentioned that maybe I should go to an AA meeting after they saw that I was consuming mass quantities of vodka and smoking marijuana every night and all night...all while I was DJing. After I had fallen down - literally - on the job a few times - the management said I need to take a break and straighten out.

That was it. I had to give sobriety a try or I knew I could not stay sane in the way I was living. I was using this mass quantity of alcohol and drugs to stuff the pain of holding in all these feelings of rage, resentment, disappointment, abandonment, rejection, obsession, and fear of permanent insanity.

I felt I did not belong anywhere, that I was an alien and unique in a bad way.

So, I found out that the first step was to admit that I was powerless on my own to stop drinking and using, and God knows, I tried, but the pain got worse after I stopped.

That's when I turned to my friends who suggested AA and they took me to a meeting and then I knew I was home, at last.

B: What advice would you give a) mom or dad and b) the addict to help prevent the cycle of addiction and pain, or at least catch it before it gets to a desperate point?

T: I can't answer that question because I come from such a dysfunctional family, I cannot imagine my parents giving me good advice.

So, what have we learned so far?

1. Some people become alcoholics or addicts because they need the substances to soothe the deep emotional pain caused by toxic family situations.
2. When the whole family is sick, there are no rules by which to live "normally", and therefore no guidance as to what is right or wrong in the moral or ethical sense.
3. The quest to understand what one is feeling is a great challenge for those who have had to stuff their feelings just to survive as a kid at home.
4. The desire to belong is a powerful force and needs to be fulfilled for healing to begin. Belonging means the end of isolation and the start of a journey into the light.