

## What Stops Me

I'll never forget the day my brother and I came home from school and came face to face with the person who changed my life. I was eleven years old when my brother and I were taken into foster care. Not only were we taken from my mom, but we were split apart and unable to have any contact with anyone we knew. There I was, alone, scared, angry, and worst of all laying on what was my new bed in a stranger's house filled with people I've never seen in my life.

Isolated from everything and anyone I knew, I remember asking myself, "is this real? Why me? Was there anything I could have done to change this?" I certainly wasn't proud of who I was or where I came from. I was in a foster home for three weeks, the longest three weeks of my life. I wish I could have gone back and changed everything.

I remember slowly watching my mom slip back into her old habits of drinking and doing drugs. It was just like the first time, the signs were all there but there was nothing I could do. Everything she had worked so hard for quickly disappeared, again. My brother and I were now the last thing on her mind. Her addictions had taken over her, and had become priority.

It wasn't till I went to live with my grandparents that I realized that being taken from my mom was a blessing, and how it possibly saved my life. Not only did it save me from throwing my life away but was what probably kept me alive. I knew I never wanted to end up anything like my mom, which had become my worst fear. Throwing my life away was not an option. I was determined to make something of it; I wanted to show the world I was stronger than I appeared.

From that point on, I strived to be the best, to make my life better, to make myself a better person. So here I am today, soon to be the first in my family to graduate from high school, go to college, and earn a degree, to go follow my dreams to become a nurse, and make something of myself. Who would have thought, looking back at where I came from and where I am now? I know I wouldn't have when I was eleven.

Anyone else would have wanted to forget about this part of their life, but not me. This was the time in my life when I found who I was and became proud of it. I made a promise and commitment to myself that I would never end up like my mom, becoming an

alcoholic and an addict. The harm and the pain she caused herself and loved ones around her was not worth it. To this day I have never done drugs or have had a sip of an alcoholic beverage, and have never had the urge to. Being curious and experimenting with alcohol and drugs is not worth the consequences that can possibly come from it.

In this day in age it seems as if no one can go anywhere to get away from drugs and alcohol. I can't count how many times I have heard people talking about how they got high or drunk at a party, whether it be at school, work, at the store, or wherever. Drugs and alcohol are seen everywhere in society, can't blame teens for being curious to see what the fuss is all about. Society advertises the use of alcohol and drugs in commercials and movies, and most often in a way that makes drinking and doing drugs appear fun. It doesn't help with the pressure coming from friends either. Teens naturally want to be accepted by their peers, even if that means putting ones self in danger such as using drugs or drinking. When experimenting with drugs and alcohol it may be the first, and hopefully the last time if lucky; However, there is always the chance that the first time can just be the start to a down hill spiral such as my mom went through.

When my friends ask about why or how I became adopted I tell them my story. Although I haven't always been so forth coming about it, I have come to realize that the people and friends around can benefit from it. I tell them that my mom's addictions started when she had just barely began high school, and where she has ended up today and how she got there. I feel my story can be impactful and make a difference in people my age, and hopefully make them think twice before trying drugs or being curious about drinking.