

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jason, and I am an alcoholic. But I am so much more: father, husband, son, brother, attorney, JLAP volunteer, board member for community organizations. This list goes on. JLAP gave me the bridge from where I once was to be the person I am today.

I don't have a family history of addiction, and throughout college and the few years following graduation I didn't believe I had any negative consequences with alcohol. I could take it or I could leave it. In law school things began to change, and I began to use alcohol as a coping mechanism. In relatively short order my use of alcohol increased, especially the amount I drank in private. I made numerous attempts to stop drinking, thinking it was just a matter of willpower, a decision I could make. Willpower and hard work had always yielded success, but for the first time these familiar tools failed me.

I was referred to JLAP for the first time by the BLE when I registered for the bar exam because I reported a DUI from my college years. At that time I viewed JLAP as a punitive consequence rather than a source of support and help. I wasn't honest with myself and others, especially JLAP. I was guarded to say the least. I told Tim, the clinical director of JLAP, only what I wanted him to know, what I thought he wanted to hear. My goal was to be in control, and to fix, manage, and maintain the situation. But the harder I tried to be in control, the less control I actually had. I was no longer drinking to cope with stressors; I was drinking to cope with life, to function. The chains of addiction are subtle; by the time one knows they are bound the chance of escape is nil.

So began my journey. I was in and out of JLAP and recovery for 6 years before I got sober. I struggled greatly with the fact that my intellectual ability, which had always served me so well, couldn't find a way out of this problem. Eventually I realized that I would never represent a client if I didn't have the skills to competently handle their legal problem, so why would I keep trying to solve my problem with alcohol when I clearly didn't have the skills needed? When I looked at it through this lens, JLAP wasn't an adversary, they were an ally.

JLAP provided hope by putting me in contact with others who had acquired the skills to competently advise me on the path out. I began to see the great support network of judges and lawyers that was available to me, and I came to understand that the self-regulation of the legal profession goes beyond setting minimum standards; we care about each other. Through JLAP I have met both lawyers and judges who were phenomenally successful in all aspects of their lives and all had found the key to unlock the chains of addiction. They had found the solution to the problem which plagued me and wanted to share the path with me; I just had to follow it.

Today my life is more exciting, fun, energetic...more everything. Living sober has become my specialty, and JLAP helps me to do that. The only way for me to repay that gift is to help others. My greatest joy is being able to work with others, to share my pain and show them they are not alone. Most importantly, I know the path out. Today I have the privilege of serving in a leadership position in my firm, and have the honor of serving on numerous civic boards. I am able to work with other attorneys, judges, and youth in my community.

Wanting to be a good father, husband, son, brother, attorney, and knowing that I was failing...that was my bottom. I know the shame, hopelessness, and pain of addiction. I know what it is like to fear making a call to JLAP. If you think you might have a problem, there is no downside to contacting JLAP. Your call is completely confidential; you can talk to staff or to another attorney who is a JLAP volunteer, and they will not report you or tell anyone about your conversation. If you use alcohol as a means to an end but have discovered the more you use the farther away you get from that end, JLAP can help. I know because they did it for me. There is a solution. It is waiting here for you. All you have to do is call.