



What many considered to be typical teenage experimentation, such as smoking pot and drinking alcohol, quickly led down a dark path that cost Timothy everything. He went from having the world at his feet to homeless, living on the streets, and addicted to heroin, ultimately coming out the other side to provide hope for those still struggling.

CHRONIC JUNKIE

**A Story of Addiction, Despair,
Unconditional Love, Hope, and Triumph**
by Timothy J. Ryan

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A Story of Addiction,
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Timothy J. Ryan



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PREFACE

My story might be typical. You may have heard it before. The tale of the heroin addict from White suburbia who started by popping prescription pills at parties. Still, I share my story as a sign of hope for the addict as well as those who love the addict. It's easy to question why drug addicts do the distressing things they do and hurt the people who love them the most. It's difficult to understand why unless you have a window into their experience. The same goes for the addicts, who believe that their addictions are only harming themselves. I know the addict's side of the story far too well, but I'm still patching together my comprehension of the family's perspective. I don't know firsthand what it's like for family and friends to watch a loved one throw everything away and destroy their life while trying endlessly to help them. This is a story about a young man who, against all the odds, broke the chains of his addiction. I hope that by sharing this, a flicker of light might shine in the darkest of places and provide hope for those who are ready to give up. Here's my story.

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CHAPTER ONE: NO REASON TO LIVE

In early 2010, at the age of 24, my life had spiraled entirely out of control. For a long time, I had been depressed, and the thought of suicide was becoming more frequent with each passing day. Throughout my drug usage and during my bouts of melancholy, these ideations of suicide were normal. Still, not even once had I honestly contemplated taking my life until one critical moment. I grew up believing that suicide was a permanent solution to a temporary problem. I thought that it was a way of escaping all the hurt and pain in one's life that was probably a result of something that person had done in the first place. Perhaps it was a choice or a decision that a person had made to cause their grief to become so unbearable that they believed that the only way out was to end their life. I had zero sympathy for someone who took their own life. I viewed them as weak and thought that society would be better off without them. I came to realize that this stance was bullshit as I approached the edge of my own breaking point.

Yet there I was, living in Summit, New Jersey, sitting in a folding chair at the desk in my small room. I rolled up my shirt sleeve with one hand while I held a needle in the other. I used a leather belt to tie off the circulation in my arm. My thought was that the six bags of heroin and dime bag of cocaine that I had loaded into the needle would be enough

Timothy J. Ryan

to take away my misery for good. With everything set up and ready to go, I stuck the needle into one of my veins. I pulled the plunger back and watched as the syringe filled with blood. As the drugs began mixing with the blood, I realized that this was it; there was no turning back. I was ready to die. Without further delay, I pushed in the plunger. I loosened the belt around my arm and sat back as the rush hit me. A warm tingle swept through my body. My throat became numb, my vision blurry. My heart rate was like a rollercoaster; it pounded furiously from the cocaine, then slowed down tremendously from the heroin. The lights began to dim, and my plan to end my life by intentionally overdosing seemed to be working perfectly. Soon after, everything went dark. My final thoughts were of my family and how they would be better off without me. With no more worrying about where I was or how I was doing, we could all be at peace. I had caused them so much suffering over the years, and I didn't want that to continue.

Several hours later, I came to. I was lying on the floor. I woke up in the very same place that I just tried to escape. The needle that was supposed to administer the lethal dose of heroin lay next to me on the carpet, and a trail of dried blood ran down my arm like flaking paint. All my life, I had seemed to fail at everything. Now, in my darkest hour, I had even failed to kill myself.

But how did I end up like this? How did I become addicted to heroin? What drove me to suicide? I don't have

Chronic Junkie

perfect answers to these questions, but I can tell you that my life wasn't always like this. Growing up, I had a pleasant childhood with many friends. I played all types of sports and excelled at most of them. I was a likable kid, and wherever I went, people welcomed me with open arms. Before heroin, I cared more about other people than I cared about myself. All I ever wanted to do was to make people smile and laugh. I had the most loving family, but my addiction had taken all that from me. I threw everything away for a drug that I had a unique relationship with—a classic love/hate relationship. I like to refer to it as the Jekyll and Hyde drug. When I was high, I loved the feeling heroin gave me more than anything in the world but hated it with a passion when I was crashing and going through withdrawal. Once I started taking it, it was the only thing that I needed. Nothing else mattered but getting that next fix. I would end up doing whatever it took.



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