

A photograph of a waterfall cascading over mossy rocks in a dense forest. The water is blurred, creating a soft, white flow. The surrounding area is covered in green ferns and moss. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

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Available**

**“Money was no object at that  
time...”**

**Heidi**



I was actively using opiates, cocaine, and alcohol for three years before I got pregnant with my son. I was 30.

Everything was readily available to me. Money was no object at that time and I was in a situation where my fiancé had a really good job. We had beautiful home, nice things, and beautiful cars. I was very well put together.

I found out I was pregnant, and even then I couldn't stop using.

No one knew except for the people I was using with. I kept it really hush hush.

I wasn't really hanging out with that crowd, but I was buying from them, so it was pretty obvious what I was doing.

I hid it from all of my doctors, my parents, my family, and my sisters.

My son's dad knew about the opiates, and he wanted me to stop. He told me that the engagement would be off if I didn't. He also said he would leave me if I went on MAT because it meant I was a loser. I told him I stopped but I didn't, and I kept up the charade through my whole pregnancy.

All of the money I earned at work went toward my addictions. It didn't really matter because he was supporting me and paid for everything we needed. Looking back, he thought he was doing a good thing and trying to help me, but it really was hurting me because I wasn't being held accountable. On the outside, I was really well put together. I did not really have "the look" of someone who is addicted, and I fooled everyone.

When my son was born it was an average birth and my midwives didn't question anything. When my son spiked a fever, no one thought he might be detoxing so no one tested him. We stayed in the hospital for 5 days because of the fever and during that time they were giving me a steady stream of dilaudid throughout the day to manage pain, so I wasn't sick or detoxing.

We left the hospital together and I held it together for about 2 months until I started going downhill fast. I was out of control. I would be up for days at a time snorting cocaine, getting high. At one point I attacked my stepfather – physically and verbally. That's not me, but during that time I had zero control over myself or my emotions. It's really scary to say that even now, and I think "how could I have taken care of my baby"? After that, I stopped talking to my parents, and my sisters.

My parents eventually did an intervention and my son's dad said "you got to stop or we are done". I ultimately chose drugs.

I moved out and I was living with friends. My steady stream of income was gone so I worked as a bartender, but all of my money went to drugs.

That went on for a couple of years and I was scraping by trying to keep it together.



When I became pregnant with my daughter, that's when I decided to get help.

I was living in Montpelier and a provider down there helped me get counseling and connected to MAT and basically, get my life back on track.

It wasn't until I got into an MAT program that I was able to stop. At that point, I said screw it and I don't care what anyone thinks of me. There was a lot of shame with MAT. I had always thought that "I'm not strong enough to do it on my own and I have to depend on this medication-I'm a loser", you know all of those things you say to yourself. But I thought enough is enough. If I don't do this, I'm going to kill myself and have my children taken away.

I've been clean ever since. I'm still in a MAT program and I have no plans of getting off because I'd like to think that I wouldn't go back to using but I don't know that for sure. I can say that honestly because I want to hold myself accountable.

My parents, my sister and my brother have reconciled with me. It's also great with my son's father. We do joint school functions, joint birthday parties, I have dinner at their house a couple of times a month.

It wasn't like that for the first 2 years of my recovery. There was a lot of anger. The woman who is my son's stepmom was a good friend of mine and that was pretty painful so I would lash out at her. Now I am so thankful and lucky that it was her and that she took over and took care of my son in ways that I couldn't. At the time I couldn't see because I was so angry but now it's great. We plan holidays together, we share childcare. I'll drop my daughter off there and they will drop their kids off with me.

It couldn't have happened until I got clean. Before that I wasn't in a place to accept it. I was still blaming everyone else but myself for the way things went down.

I have been clean for almost 6 years and I plan to stay that way!

*Heidi*